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THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR MEN

WHY MORE
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**LIVING LIFE
ON THE ROAD**

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EMILY WILLIS**
GOOD GIRL
GONE BAD

**JUNE PET
ADDIE ANDREWS**
BARES ALL
IN BLIND FAITH

**SECRET LUXURY
ESCAPES**
FROM MEXICO
TO BALI
TO KAUAI

SIRIUS XM'S
RUDE JUDE
ON CENSORSHIP
AND SEX

**AN ORAL HISTORY
OF *SEX SURVIVOR***
THE FYRE FESTIVAL
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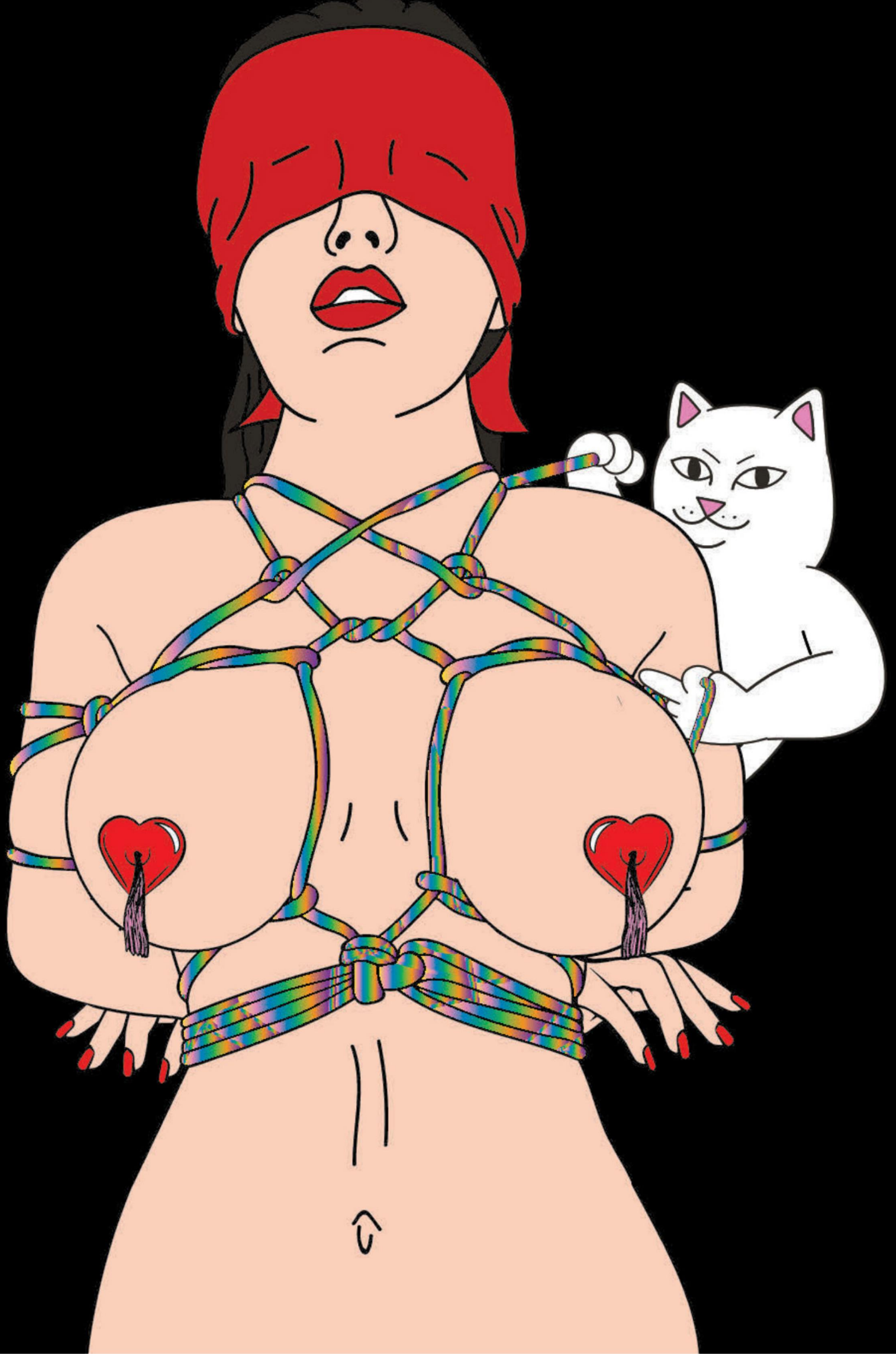

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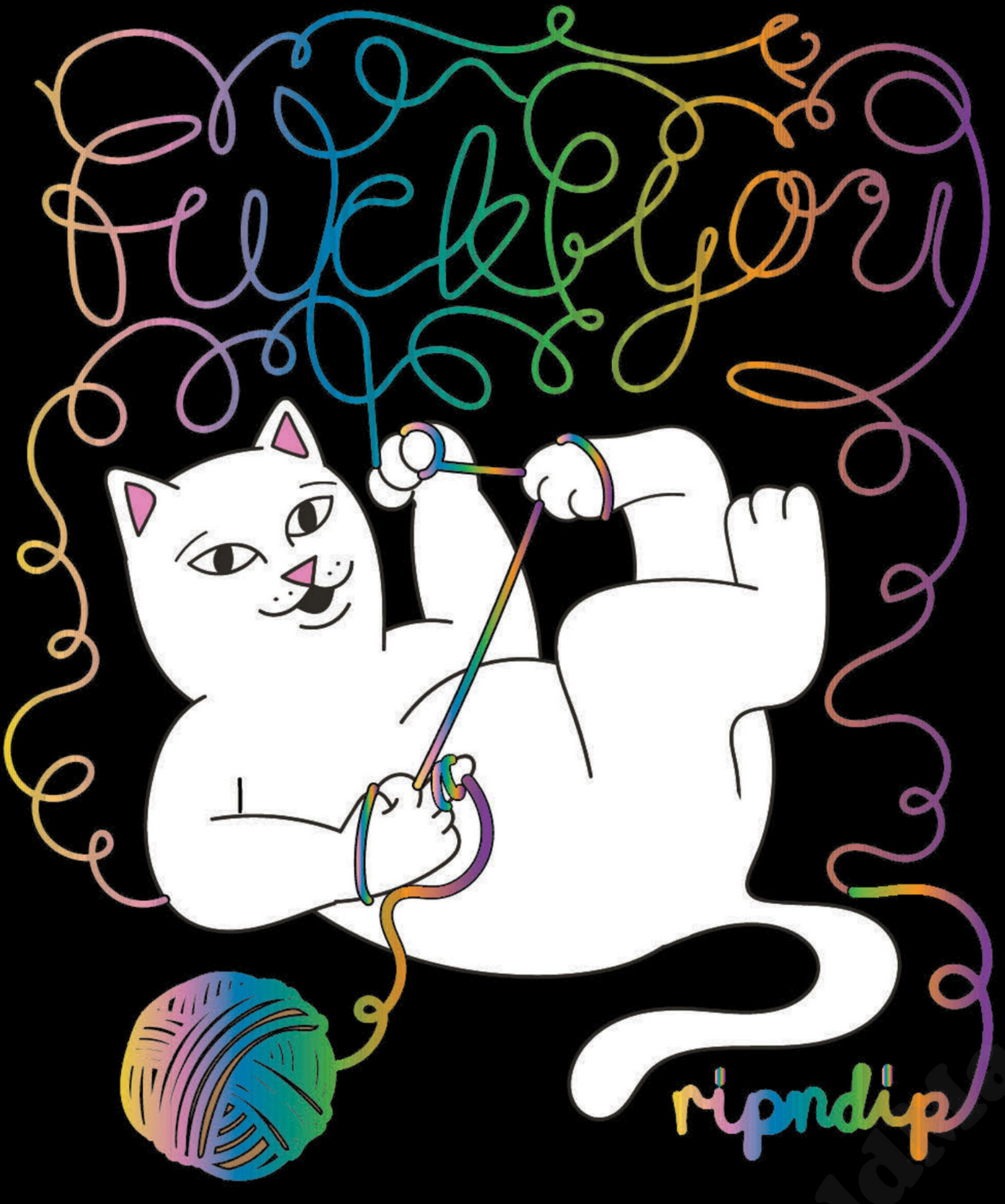
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FROM THE EDITOR

I'VE always been into eccentric people. I'm drawn to imperfection. Maybe that's why punk always made so much sense to me growing up. It was all about being a fish out of water, breaking the rules, and doing things your own way (until it wasn't anymore—but I digress).

These days, in the Trump era, it feels like everyone is extra-extra. And I'm not complaining. But whereas in the past, it was mainly the quirks of celebrities that got our attention, today, with social media, we have all willingly given ourselves up to the world. We are all in the spotlight now, for better or worse. Either way, in 2019, it's tweet or be tweeted about. Save yourself first. Luckily, it's easy to turn off and unplug the noise of the world. *Click!* So power down your phone and dive into the pages of *Penthouse*.

This issue pays homage to the eccentrics you may never have heard of, like in Elle Hardy's excellent feature, "Rubber Tramps," where she explores why so many Americans (and the writer herself) have given up their mortgages and rent payments to live life on the road. Then there's the debaucherous insanity behind Michelle Lhooq's piece, "An Oral History of *Sex Survivor*" (pun totally intended), chronicling the first ever reality-show contest based solely on fucking. We also have up-and-coming pop queen Emily Vaughn, Sirius XM's controversial "Rude Jude" Angelini, and sensational producer and electronic musician Gabby Bianco as our eccentric Muse. Plus, we welcome our two newest Penthouse Pets, Emily Willis and Addie Andrews, who both happen to be former Mormons. Flip a few more pages down to a special pictorial with June 2017 Pet of the Month Olive Glass, another talented beauty who escaped the constrictions of Utah's favorite religion. Amen.

Mish Barber-Way
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MAY 2019 PET EMILY WILLIS

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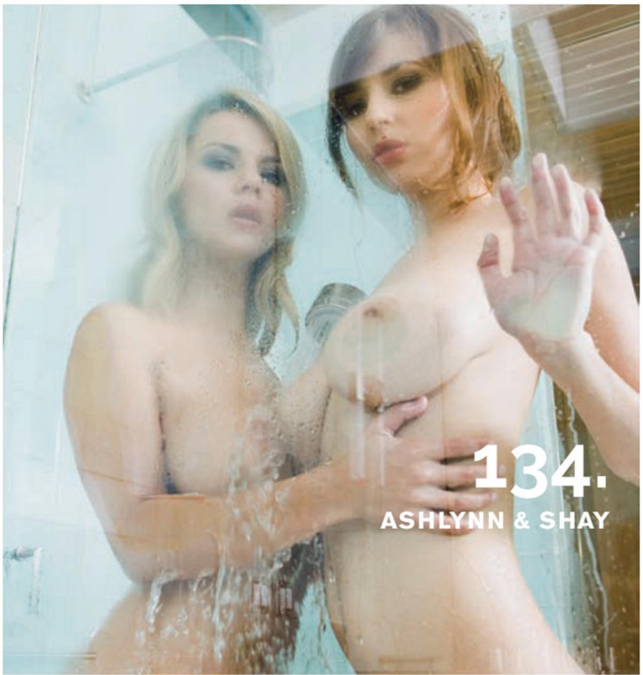

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

New Friends

One winter night after work I decided to take a brief detour to enjoy a glass of wine before heading home. I stopped at a small neighborhood spot and ordered my usual, then I chose a seat at the empty fireside bar.

When a couple sat beside me and started to make small talk, I was happy to join in their fun. As the conversation began to flow, they both moved closer to me, eventually splitting up so that one sat on my right and the other sat on my left. →

Before long, our friendly conversation took a flirty turn. It started with a light brush of Lauren's fingers over my arm that wound up straying ever so slightly to the side of my breast. Thinking I must have imagined it, I leaned into Lauren, at which point she boldly stroked her finger right over my nipple.

This definitely wasn't the direction I'd imagined my night would go, but who am I to look a gift horse in the mouth?

I let my legs fall open on the barstool, making my thigh press against Lauren's. She scooted her seat even closer to mine so that the sides of our arms, hips, and thighs touched. It felt natural to sit like that with her—arms wound around one another, turned slightly so that we could still see Jason.

When Jason skimmed his hand over my thigh and brushed his thumb over the sensitive spot where my leg and hip connect, I knew I wouldn't be going home alone as planned.

Sure enough, once we'd each drained the last of our drinks, Lauren suggested we continue our evening back at their apartment.

Once the door clicked shut behind us, all hints of propriety went out the window. Jason kissed my neck as he eased my jacket down my arms. After letting my coat fall to the floor, he set to work warming my newly exposed skin, erasing the goose bumps that cropped up after a single smoldering look from his wife.

Meanwhile, Lauren sank to her knees and settled at my feet. She unzipped my boots and helped me step out of them, then she rose up to my hips and popped the button on my pants.

I could feel her hot breath permeating the flimsy fabric of my underwear to heat my pussy.

Lauren looked up at me from beneath lowered lashes. She held my gaze while she eased the zipper on my slacks all the way down. A light tug on the waistband made the pants fall right down my legs.

We were still in the apartment's entryway and, already, I was only half-dressed. Lauren's mouth hovered over my mound. I could feel her hot breath fanning over me, permeating the flimsy fabric of my underwear to heat my pussy.

That's the moment Jason's hands found their way under my top. He stood behind me, holding my back to his chest while his hands swooped over my tummy and reached up to cup my breasts. He rocked his hips against my ass, and I could feel the bulge of his erection through his jeans. Even after he went still, I could feel him between my cheeks, easing his way into my crack.

When Jason gripped the hem of my blouse in his fists, I thought he would tear right through the fabric. Instead, my shirt went the way of my coat and pants. Jason whipped it over my head and tossed it over his shoulder, leaving me in nothing but my lacy pink bra and matching panties.

Lauren took my hand and rose to her full height. "I think it's time we move this party to the bedroom," she said.

She dropped my hand and walked toward the back of the apartment, leaving a trail of her own clothing as she went.

Jason followed behind us. When I glanced over my shoulder, I saw that he'd shucked off his shirt as well. A light dusting of hair covered his chest, tapering off into a trail that pointed right down his pants. He met my eye and smiled, knowing he had caught me staring.

Feeling a blush beginning to bloom on my cheeks, I turned back to see Lauren burst through a set of French doors adorned with frosted glass. She bounded into the room, making straight for the massive bed that sat at its center.

Lauren jumped onto the mattress and crawled to the middle. We locked eyes as she reached around her back and released her bra clasp. Rather than tug the bit of lingerie off, she let the loosened straps fall down her arms, dragging the cups with them to slowly reveal her pink-tipped breasts.

"Come join me and I'll help you with yours," she said.

Lauren extended her hand to help me onto the elevated bed. She curved a hand over my ass and pulled me close, resting her cheek on my breast. Her hand snaked around my back and moved up my spine, stopping just beneath my shoulder blades.

Nimble fingers curled around my bra clasp and gave it a quick twist, making it pop open with ease. After that, the weight of my breasts and gravity did the rest. The bra fell right off, and Lauren was there waiting.

She palmed one of my breasts, squeezing lightly as she lifted my flesh closer to her lips, then she opened her mouth and drew my nipple inside.

While Lauren was busy playing with my breasts, Jason joined us on the bed. In the time it took his wife to remove my bra, Jason had removed all of his clothing. He came up behind me and brushed his hand over my shoulder to move my hair and reveal my neck.

Jason trailed warm, wet kisses all along the sensitive flesh. Then he nibbled at the delicate bit of skin located just behind my earlobe, and my whole body trembled.

With Jason holding me so close, the subtle motion was impossible to hide. The vibrations made it all the way to my ass, which happened to be pressed against Jason's rock-solid cock. His fingers splayed over my thighs, digging into the thick muscle as he rocked his hips hard against my ass.

Jason's voice rumbled in my ears. "Why don't we all get more comfortable?"

Lauren removed her mouth from my breast long enough to help me over to the pile of pillows resting against the bed's headboard. She kneeled alongside me and ran her hands over my rib cage and up to my chest.

"I love your breasts," Lauren murmured as she gave them a squeeze. "They're so full and perky."

She punctuated the sentence by sucking my nipple into her mouth. Her tongue swirled around the nub, licking and sucking until it grew hard.

While Lauren's mouth worked over one nipple, her right hand went to the other. She pinched the bud between her pointer finger and

PHOTOS: ROMAN SAMBORSKYI / SHUTTERSTOCK

thumb, applying just enough pressure to produce a light sting that resonated in my clit.

Then there was Jason. He kneeled between my legs, watching intently as his wife played with my tits. His hands skimmed up and down my legs, starting from the ankle and traveling all the way up to my hip. Each time he reached my thighs, he swooped down to the warm flesh on the inside, skirting closer to my pussy with every pass.

When Jason's hand finally brushed over my clit, stars burst right before my eyes.

But he didn't linger. His fingers kept on moving down into my slit. He opened his fingers wide, pulling my folds apart. Then he ran his hand down the center, using my juices to get his skin nice and slick.

Hand gliding along my lubricated pussy, Jason slipped back up to my clit. He pressed the tips of his fingers to the little bundle of nerves, circling my clit slowly.

My body melted under his touch. The initial shock of feeling his hand on my clit gave way to pure pleasure. He and Lauren worked in concert to get me off.

By now Lauren had extended her touch far beyond my breasts. Though her mouth remained firmly latched to a nipple, Lauren's hands started to wander over my upper body. Her fingers skimmed over my skin, heightening my sensitivity to a point that even gently grazing over my arm made the pulse between my legs beat harder.

Lauren hovered over me, blocking my view of Jason so that I couldn't see that he'd shifted positions. Suddenly the delicate touch of his fingers was replaced by something hot and thick.

He slid his shaft over my slit, coating himself with my arousal. The tip of his dick tapped against my clit, making my hips jerk beneath him.

Finally, Jason positioned himself right against my hole. He circled the tip of his dick, priming my pussy so that he could slip inside.

Jason entered me slowly, easing his hips forward until he was buried to the hilt. His fingers curled into my hips as he pulled me onto his lap, angling my body so that even a slight twitch of his dick made my pussy pulse.

Since Jason's hands were otherwise occupied, Lauren took over the task of addressing my clit. Her pert nipples brushed against my abdomen as she bent over me, skating her fingers toward my bud.

Lauren's fingers connected with my clit at the exact moment her husband's dick pressed against my G spot. They moved in tandem, working together to make my moans turn into full-on screams.

Then Lauren managed to fit her mouth over my clit.

"Holy fuck!"

My scream echoed off the walls. The combination of Lauren's tongue working my clit and Jason's thick, long dick pumping inside my pussy was more than I could take.

My walls clamped down hard on Jason's dick, holding him in place so that he would keep rubbing on my G spot. Soon the tightness in my pussy spread to my limbs. All of my muscles grew impossibly tense, and then, after a few gasping breaths, I fell over the edge.

Every bit of my body rippled and twitched as my orgasm rolled through me. That was very good news for Jason's dick. My walls fluttered against his shaft, milking him until he exploded inside me, filling my pussy with hot come.

We collapsed in a sweaty tangle of limbs, taking a blissed-out break before indulging in another round.

When I left the following morning, I had two new phone numbers saved in my cell and plans to meet them both for drinks the following night.

—Erika H., Denver, Colorado

Seeing is believing. When you've had the encounter you've been hoping for, let us know about it! Send your letters to: *Penthouse* magazine, 8944 Mason Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311, or email us at letters@penthouse.com.

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WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE

CALIFORNIA MANUFACTURER Abyss Creations created the first RealDoll in the late nineties, but in the last ten years, the concept of life-size sex dolls has exploded all over the world. Many customers keep their dolls at home for private enjoyment only, but recently, sex doll brothels have been popping up in Germany, England, the Netherlands, and now France, too.

According to *Forbes,* the newest French brothel claims a prestigious, relaxing, and very personal experience with "Xdolls" Lily, Sofia, or Kim. Rates run from $110 an hour to $185, depending on the length of time spent with the doll and how many customers there are. And judging by their online profiles, the dolls seem pretty psyched to be in business.

If you're visiting France and feel like hooking up with a doll, be sure to book your appointment on the brothel's website (**xdolls.fr**). Walk-ins are not welcome at this dollhouse.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / BY FOSSIANT

THE WONDER MINERAL

THERE'S A REASON that you take charcoal pills to avoid brutal hangovers and that your girlfriend insists on brushing her teeth with black powder once a week—charcoal is a magical mineral. But it does even greater wonders for your skin.

The black carbon in charcoal acts like a magnet and draws out impurities, poisons, and other microparticles. It also naturally exfoliates the skin without stripping it to unhealthy levels, like some products do.

When you're working at a dirty job all day, you need to take care of your face (it's the only one you've got), so invest in a good charcoal face scrub. We recommend Origins Clear Improvement Active Charcoal Mask (**origins.com, $26**), Dermalogica Charcoal Rescue Masque (**dermalogica.com, $49**), or Jack Black Face Buff Energizing Scrub (**sephora.com, $18**).

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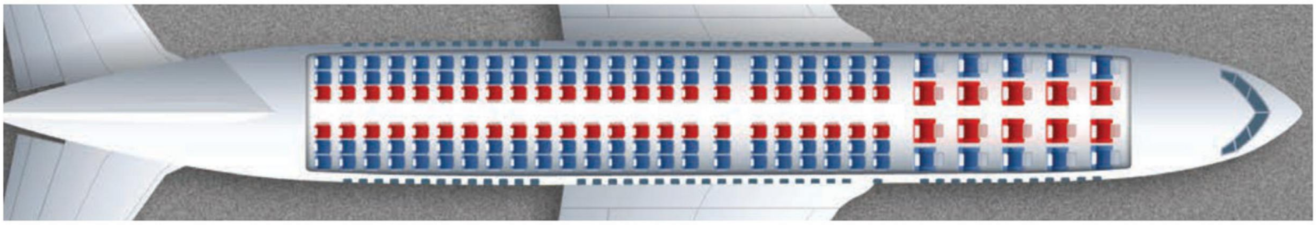


RECYCLED AIR FAIR

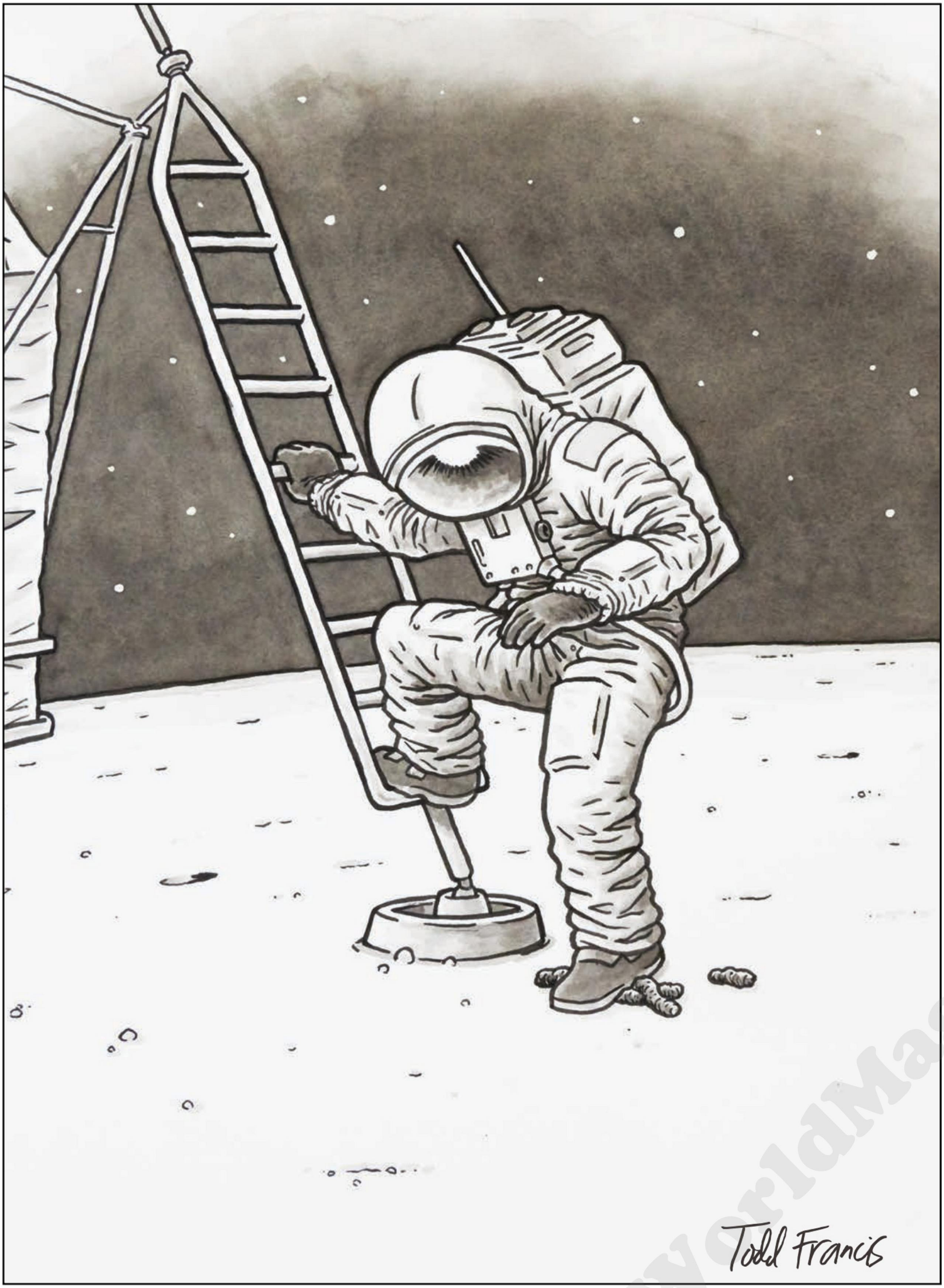
EVERYONE KNOWS that your chances of catching something increase with air travel. Now, a new study shows there's a science to avoiding germs on the plane, and it's as simple as choosing the right seat.

According to a paper published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* the best thing to do is pick a window seat and stay put for the entire duration of the flight to minimize your chance of coming into contact with any sick passenger's pathogens. The study determined that people seated along the aisle and those who made frequent trips to the bathroom were more likely to catch something.

Though the study feels like it was conducted by Captain Obvious, this was the first time researchers actually tracked how germs spread on an aircraft by recording the movements of passengers and crew members during ten domestic flights. The researchers made their observations during the flights and swabbed seatbelt buckles afterward. What they found is that people seated by windows were outside the most contagious radius, and were more likely to walk off the flight uninfected by passengers exhibiting signs of illness.

We always knew the window seat was best for sleeping, but now we have a whole new reason to call dibs.

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK – 'CHARCOAL' BY JAROMIR CHALABALA, ORIGINAL 'AIRPLANE' ILLUSTRATION BY GOLDEN SIKORKA

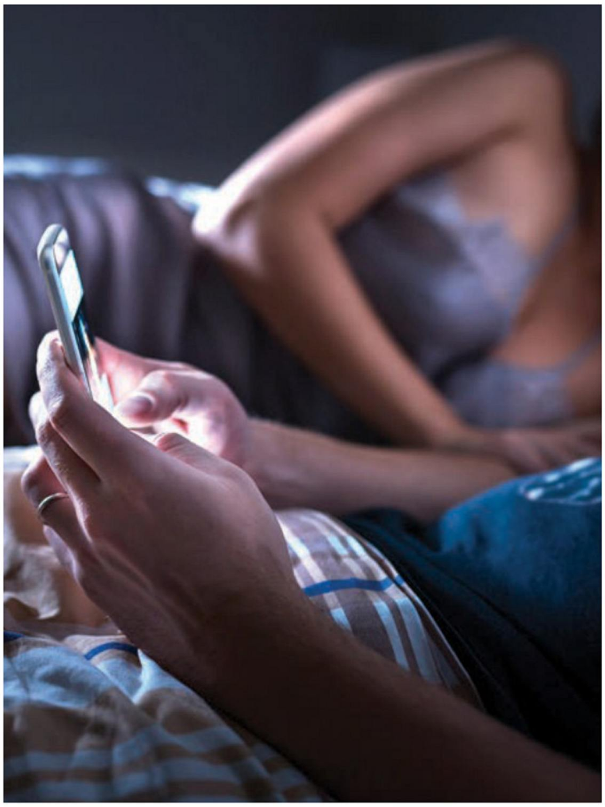

Todd Francis

BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

DESPITE ALL THE TALK of superfoods and powerful multivitamins peddled by pop-culture figures like Joe Rogan, it turns out that the best thing you can do for your immune system is to walk around the block (or wherever) for 30 minutes a day.

Professor David Nieman of Appalachian State University has spent years studying the effects exercise has on human health and immune function. In a recent study, Nieman found that walking or light jogging for 30 minutes every day will help your body fight common cold and flu symptoms, because it increases the circulation of white blood cells (which fight infection), and helps clear pathogens.

Nieman also noted that overdoing it won't help, either, stating that 75 minutes or more of intense exercise causes "stress hormones to go way up, and the immune system does not respond well to that." Of course, 30 minutes a day of any exercise is nil if it's accompanied by a crap diet. So keep it consistent, manageable, and remember to eat right.



STOP PHUBBING

WE'VE ALL BEEN SNUBBED before, but you may be phubbed—or phubbing someone else—on a daily basis and have no idea.

"Phubbing" is the act of ignoring the person physically with you so you can look at your phone, and apparently this is a major downer when it comes to intimate relationships. A 2017 study of married couples found that phubbing a spouse was linked to astronomical rates of depression, and dissatisfaction with the relationship as a whole.

So the answer is simple. Whether you're cooking dinner, out for lunch, watching your favorite show, or just lying in bed, when it comes to spending quality time with your partner, phones should be silenced and tucked away. (If you've got an iPhone, be sure to use the Screen Time feature so you can track the minutes spent flicking through Instagram and other social media sites. Then you'll really see all your wasted time—time that could be spent IRL with the person you love. So turn off your goddamn phone!)

SAVED BY THE BELL

SOMETIMES THERE'S virtue in never emptying your car of fast-food condiments.

Just ask Jeremy Taylor, 36, who took his dog Ally off-roading in the Oregon snow in late February. It was all fun and games until Taylor's SUV got lodged in a deep snowbank, and he was trapped in the middle of nowhere. Did we mention he didn't have his phone with him?

Five days later, he was finally found by a snowmobiler, but during his ordeal, Taylor and his pup survived by periodically turning on the engine for heat and sucking on the Taco Bell sauce packets he'd stashed in his SUV.

"Taco Bell fire sauce saves lives," Taylor wrote on Facebook after being rescued.

Taco Bell rewarded Taylor with a year's supply of their food, "and all the sauce packets that come with it," the company said.

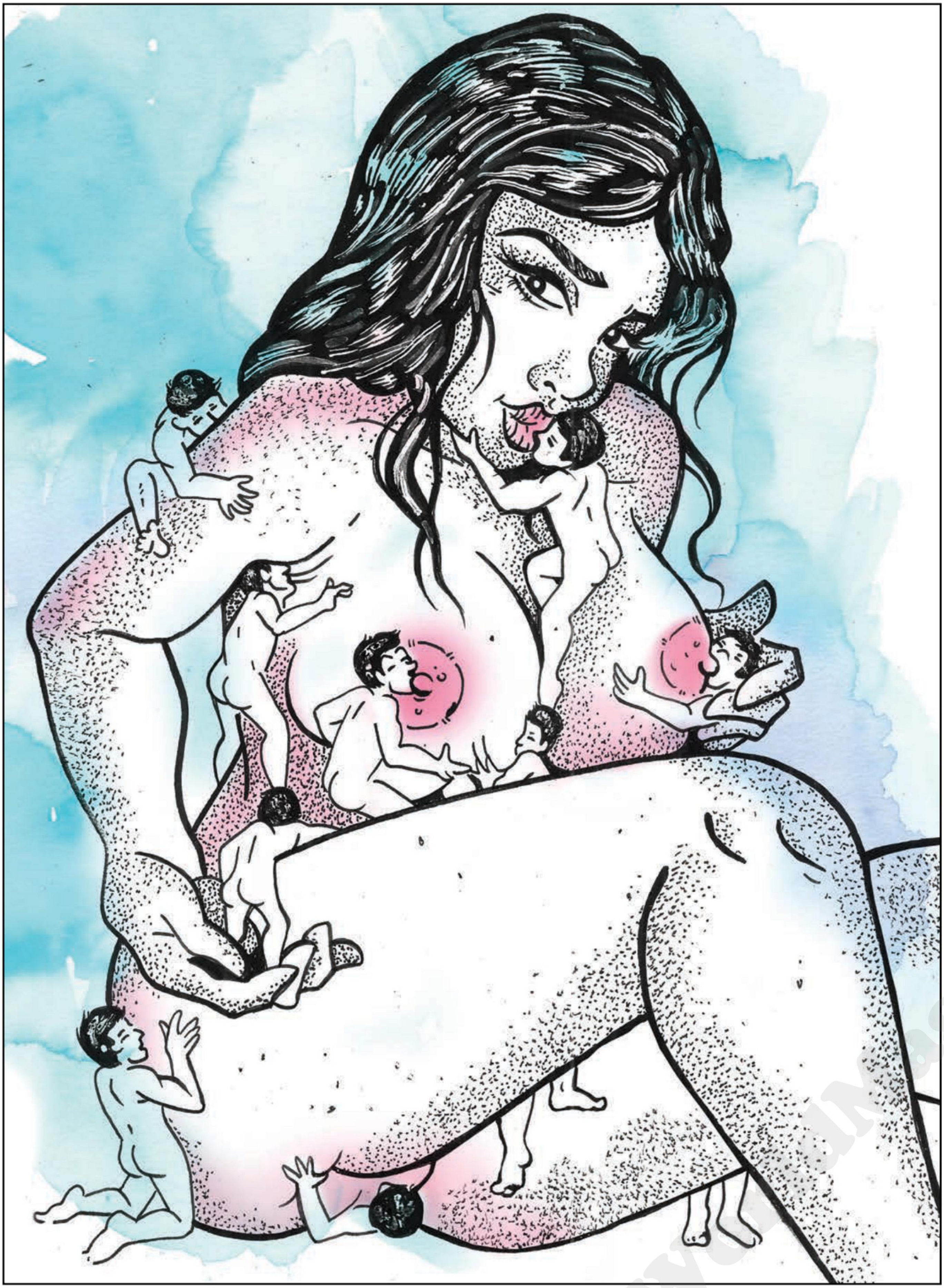
ONE POUND FOR THE HOUND

ACCORDING TO A JONES COUNTY Sheriff's Department Facebook post, a family dog in Laurel, Mississippi, brought home a very special and extremely potent gift for her masters in the spring of 2016: a giant bag of weed.

After Miley, a black lab mix, was let outside to do her business, she strolled back in carrying a bag filled with cannabis, the weed separated into smaller baggies, clearly primed for sale. Instead of keeping the happy booty, however, the dog's owners called police and turned in the stash.

What responsible citizens they must have in Ole Miss! Had this happened in Southern California, where Penthouse HQ is located, the dog would have walked herself down to a boutique dog dispensary and café on Melrose and gotten ripped with her buddies.

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK – 'JOGGER' BY LJUPCO SMOKOVSKI, 'PHUBBING' BY TERO VESALAINEN, 'CHIHUAHUA' BY ANNETTE SHAFF, 'MARIJUANA DOG' BY MALAMOOSHI



IS CONSERVATISM THE NEW PUNK ROCK?

The short answer? Hell no.

BY ZACHARY LIPEZ

AFTER the last presidential election, some music commentators believed they had discovered the possibility of a silver lining: “Punk will be better under Trump.”

We figured that would be the most inane subculture-concerned assertion this decade—at least among those takes that gained a modicum of currency. Nope. Something else had surfaced a little earlier, but seemed destined to shrivel of its own inanity. That didn’t happen. “Conservatism is the new punk” emerged, gained a bit of traction in select right-wing quarters, and now floats like a U-boat moored in a fetid bay of discourse as we approach the next election.

Now, knowing how much those in these aforementioned quarters value the “vigorous exchange of ideas,” or whatever it is they call misgendering trans people and mocking school-shooting survivors, I won’t simply counter this absurd claim by telling these ahistorical nerds to go fuck a jackboot. I will instead try to counter their attempts to appropriate God’s greatest one-chord wonder, punk, with the intellectual dark web’s own cuddly toy—logic.

First, a concession. Punk, as both fashion and music, has always had a huge reactionary strain. As was pointed out by right-winger Kurt Schlichter in his 2014 column, “Conservatism Is the New Punk Rock” (which, by the way, predated English vlogger Paul Joseph Watson’s now-infamous use of the phrase), the Ramones—arguably the first punk band, if you, incorrectly, ignore Peru’s Los Saicos—had a right-leaning member. Johnny Ramone was a Reagan-loving Republican.

And while much of early punk’s use of fascistic imagery was driven largely by a petulant need to shock, there was barely any time between punk’s popular inception and the rising of entirely fash movements like Rock Against Communism. If anything, punk arguably would have happily remained a debauched art-school exercise in pissing off the libs if the right’s rise within it hadn’t forced a response. After all, hating the hippies back then was de rigueur.

Conservatives could use punk’s failure to always live up to its self-mythology if they weren’t more invested in rhetorical points than the music. Though I suppose the admission, “Actually, I don’t just listen to the first Skrewdriver” would be saying the quiet part loud.

Of course, men like Paul Joseph Watson are more interested in the cultural cachet of being truth-bomb-dropping Henry Rollinses of the right than in engaging with punk as art. Like Gavin McInnes, Dave Rubin, and all the others who have staked their intellectual reputations on pure reactionarism, Watson is interested in the idea of “PUNK RAWK”—an almost baby boomer-ish fairy tale of absolute freedom combined with a baby’s inclination to paint the walls with its own shit. Punk reduced to the Sex Pistols and GG Allin thrusting out their middle fingers

ILLUSTRATION BY TARA JACOBY

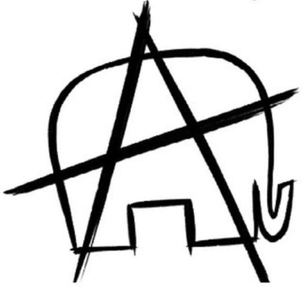
like beads thrown at Mardi Gras. Watson latches onto John Lydon—onetime Johnny Rotten of the Pistols—big-upping Brexit as though the Clash hadn't already presciently addressed this with "He who fucks nuns will later join the church."

The Paul Watsons of the infosphere so badly want the rickety equation "conservatism = the new punk rock" to be dictum that they're, by necessity, happy to wipe away any rational history of the genre—good and bad.

The fact that punk has always been an amorphous mess of ideas, with ideological and anti-ideological strains shooting off willy-nilly across any and all spectrums, is not a useful concept if your entire argument is predicated upon taking away something you suppose the opposition values. This isn't a coherent position—it's just hoping to hurt the feelings of some random girl with a bunch of piercings.

Watson and his ilk's central thesis is that "The Left" (and, within that vague designation, socialism, PC culture, the mainstream media, etc.) is the monolith culture, so anything that offends this oppressive mass is, by some mathematical property I'm not familiar with, punk.

PUNK HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN AMORPHOUS MESS OF IDEAS, WITH IDEOLOGICAL AND ANTI-IDEOLOGICAL STRAINS SHOOTING OFF WILLY-NILLY ACROSS ANY AND ALL SPECTRUMS.



The obvious retort to this is that cops aren't on the left, and the police are not punk. And, brother, Watson and his ilk sure as shit love cops. The alt-right is joined in this affection by the mainstream media and the vast majority of Democrats in national office. I won't use this limited space to debate the merits of the prison industrial complex and a fully militarized police force, but I think we can/should all agree that, with the exception of Joe from The Queers—and while conceding that some leftist punks sure seem to have the souls of cops—there's nothing punk about loving actual, uniformed, backed-by-state-and-truncheon cops. At the risk of complicating the argument with unasked-for nuance, even any skinhead worth his boots and braces hates cops. (Please note the 1982 British punk song "A.C.A.B." by notorious PC police, The 4-Skins.)

One thing the right does share with punk is a sense of being picked on. But, while punks felt harassed by forces ranging from the existential (religion, the past, Texas hicks in pickup trucks) to the political (first the Labour Party, then Thatcher; and in the U.S., Jerry Brown and Reagan both), the new right feels put upon by a loosely defined cultural "mob."

But the "mob" is what it always was—a fickle, largely split-down-the-middle, politically unknowable, and unpredictable wave. Bari Weiss gets yelled at and Marc Lamont gets fired. The Covington Catholic case didn't exactly cover anyone on the left with glory, but Gamergate and Comicsgate are ongoing shitshows with little underpinning beyond constantly shifting grievance. If the left are the new Puritans, so are the right, and so is the center, at least when it comes to things like, say, Israel. All puritans, no witches. Anyway, people always complain about the pitchfork-wielding mob, but fail to mention that in the original Mary Shelley novel, Frankenstein's Monster did, after all, kill that kid....

Whether or not white cis men are a marginalized group is not something the left and the right will ever see eye to eye on, but it all goes back to if you want your entire existence to be defined by pure reaction. The punk rockers behind both "White Minority" (Black Flag) and "Guilty of Being White" (Minor Threat) were coming from the perspective of young white men who were occasionally hassled by (also young) minorities in the urban centers they shared. But these punks left that whining behind once they realized that they were essentially voicing the GOP national platform.

Look, mainstream culture is neither left nor right. It's the same mix of nihilism, amoral statecraft masked by religiosity, and market-driven distraction that led our country to invade the Philippines, establish Hollywood as an exploitative world monopoly, delay our joining World War II, maintain Jim Crow (in various forms) to this day, support the 1953 Iran coup, invade Iraq, assassinate Patrice Lumumba, and occupy Afghanistan for almost two decades with minimal public attention.

Mainstream culture—beyond occasionally inconveniencing the career of some star for their use of the N-word or briefly delaying a preordained seat on the Supreme Court—gives not a damn about the left. And if it appears to hold the right in disdain, it's only because people, for whatever reason, prefer their war propaganda with "Fortunate Son" playing over the credits.

Punk rock is, was, and always will be a profoundly dumb genre of music with a wildly rancid undercurrent. I hold no illusions about it. But it's also the genre of music I most love, and the punk-rock "lifestyle"—partial leftist politics, drugs, cool boots, and all—is the one I am most comfortable existing on the periphery of. But, to quote England's finest melodic hardcore band, Leatherface, I have my place in the scheme of things. And that place lies outside punk. Still, in my calcified and impotent bones, I need to defend it from this recent calumny.

It would be pretty neat to end this with a "When it all comes down to it, punk is really about…" moral. But the truth is that punk is not about anything. It was started by malcontents whose grievances spanned from the trivial to the profound. And those grievances were as disparate and slippery in 1977 as they are now. The new clarion callers of the white minority see themselves as victimized arbiters of some larger, unpopular "Truth." That's fine, but that's hardly a novel self-perception.

L.A.'s Minutemen had a song called "Do You Want New Wave or Do You Want the Truth?" It asks "Should words serve the truth?.... I shout for history." And it ends, "I am a cesspool for all the shit to run down in."

The song doesn't sound "punk" at all, but of course it is. It is lovely and vulgar and wildly strange. Music for the uncertain; music for those trying to get by but not just trying to get by. And certainly not at the cost of fucking over those around them. In the gutter but looking at the stars, and all that romantic pining for a greater purpose, while never denying the earthly shit of existence—that's what this Minutemen song communicates to me.

I don't think Paul Joseph Watson, or Kurt Schlichter, or even their intellectual dark web overlords, are worthy inheritors of such a legacy. Frankly, they're just not complicated enough.

Zachary Lipez is a writer and bartender in New York City. He is the author (with collaborators Stacy Wakefield and Nick Zinner) of "131 Different Things," which published in late 2018.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AUDREY MA

JUDE ANGELINI

Jude Angelini is a tough one to put in a box: part author, part radio host, but always a guy who keeps it real.

INTERVIEW BY CAMILLE TODARO

To truly understand Sirius XM's "Rude Jude" Angelini, one must tune in to his *All Out Show* on Shade 45, Eminem's hip-hop music channel. From porn stars sampling sex toys, to Angelini's producer taking a kick to the nuts by a dominatrix, every weekday from 4 to 7 P.M. Eastern is a new bounty of the convoluted essence that is being human.

The 41-year-old Angelini, who hails from the rust-belt town of Pontiac, Michigan, is an advocate for free thought and a regular offender of safe spaces, saying and posting exactly what he feels without batting an eye.

For this interview, we met at Angelini's L.A. apartment, where we sat surrounded by hundreds of classic records, from Dean Martin to Steely Dan, and talked.

"I WANTED TO BE THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS AND I WANTED PEOPLE WHO MIGHT NOT WRITE A BOOK TO HAVE SOMETHING TO RELATE TO."

What do you think of our hypersensitive culture now?

I've been doing radio for 14 years. What we used to do we'd never be able to do now—it's too racy. The millennials that were 10 are now 24, and they have Twitter accounts. But the thing is, most people aren't bitches. They're centrists when it comes to these things. But they don't jump on Twitter and say, "I agree!" We allow a small, loud minority to dictate what we can and cannot say, and it's affected me in a negative way. It's kept me from getting jobs. And there's certain jokes I don't crack anymore because it's not worth the headache.

Censorship today seems so toxic to creativity. Like, I'm offended so I want you to stop creating.

I've never seen more close-minded people. This younger generation thinks that if you don't agree with them, it's a personal attack. It's not. I've got family members that won't speak to me because they don't like the way I talk, because I say whatever I want.

Tell me about *Hyena* and *Hummingbird,* your short story collections about sex, drugs, and growing up poor in Middle America.

I knew how I was viewed–I didn't go to college, I grew up poor. I was looked at as a "wigger." I was a shock jock on a hip-hop station. So I decided I'd write a book and then it snowballed. I realized that most people that bought my book hadn't bought a book in years. So I wanted to encourage people to read and to write their story.

My stories harken back to the writers of the 1970s that didn't go to college but had something to say. I wanted to be the voice of the voiceless and I wanted people who might not write a book to have something to relate to. This is the flyover states. This is the shit town. This is Bakersfield. This is Pontiac. This is Cleveland.

How did you get into radio?

I was living in Michigan, working as a window cleaner. I saved my money doing shit jobs and moved out to L.A. to act. On *The Jenny Jones Show,* I was the insult comic. Everything that made me good at that show made me bad at auditioning. The only job I ever got was for the role of a robber. I had just gotten back from Detroit where I had been robbed, so I said everything the robber said and I got the job.

We hear you have a penchant for fine-ass spectacles.

I didn't know I needed glasses until I read the teleprompter for the *Jenny Jones* people. I kept squinting. They were like, "Do you know how to read?" They thought I was illiterate. Turns out I had astigmatism. I wear expensive glasses as a way to signal to people that I have money. Isn't that what we all do, sending subtle signals to those of the opposite sex that we're worth mating with?

You're a fan of *Penthouse* Forum. Did it help you learn about the ladies?

Once when I was jerking off to Forum, I busted off to one where the dude had to give up his wife after losing a poker match. I [learned that] I like degradation. I had this downstairs neighbor and he was on welfare. He had all the 1970s *Penthouses*–that's why I like hairy pussies. He never left the house except to get groceries once a week and always left the door unlocked. I would sneak down and take his porn and jerk off.

What's your favorite drug?

Depends. I love to fuck on mushrooms. Ketamine is my favorite to do by myself. I listen to music and hallucinate. But I can't do everything I like anymore because I broke my body.

Is it true you had trouble getting *Hummingbird* noticed by reviewers?

Instead of reviewers saying, "This is trash," they just ignored it. I'd rather them be upset, at least I'd get some attention. That #MeToo shit, no literary people would review it. Finally, there was a woman who's a reviewer, but I had to sleep with her.

Power of the D?

Yeah. I had to trade some dick to get [her attention], then I had to fuck her again to get her to post it. But I'm a grown-up. I understand what I'm getting into.

Camille Todaro is a writer from Dallas, Texas. She's the author of the novel "Kept," a work of erotic fiction.

THE WONDER YEAR

In his new book, Brian Raftery explains why 1999 was the Best. Movie. Year. Ever.

BY PAUL JAMES

IN summer 1999, journalist Brian Raftery was 23 years old and had just made the big move from the cineplex desert of rural Pennsylvania to New York City. He had landed a job interning at *Entertainment Weekly,* back when the likes of Owen Gleiberman, Mark Harris, and future *Gone Girl* author Gillian Flynn could be regularly overheard in the hallways arguing passionately about the latest releases.

"It was also the first year I ever went to a screening," Raftery recalls. "It was like, *I get to see these movies for free? In a nice theater? Weeks before anyone else?* It was so exciting."

You could forgive a movie-drunk kid like Raftery for thinking every other movie he saw in 1999 was some kind of cinematic miracle. Except everyone else did, too.

It wasn't just that a bunch of compelling, distinctive smaller movies like *Being John Malkovich, Election, Rushmore,* and *Boys Don't Cry* came out that year; even a lot of the blockbusters were interesting—1999 was the year of *The Sixth Sense, The Matrix,* and *Toy Story 2*. Some movies straddled both worlds, like *The Blair Witch Project,* which was shot for next to nothing on a camcorder in the Maryland wilderness and became one of the ten highest-grossing films of the year.

Now Raftery has written a book, *Best. Movie. Year. Ever.*, in which he explores the production history of about 30 of 1999's most notable releases, from large-scale productions like *The Phantom Menace,* to cult hits like *Go* and *Galaxy Quest,* to the kind of mid-budget, auteur-driven studio projects that have increasingly become Hollywood rarities: David O. Russell's *Three Kings,* Michael Mann's *The Insider,* Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia*. And even then, he had to leave out plenty more: *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut, American Movie, The Talented Mr. Ripley,* and *Ravenous,* the bizarre Guy Pearce cannibal movie that remains one of his personal faves.

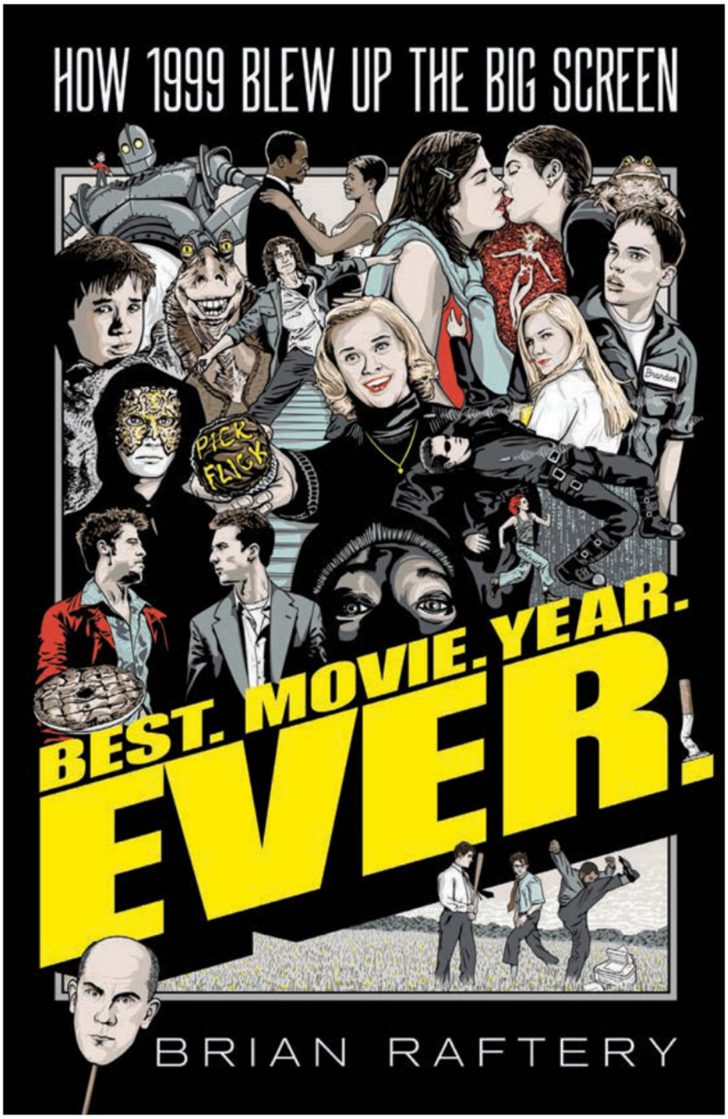
"I see 1999 as a collision between three generations of filmmakers," Raftery says. "This is the year you get Spike Jonze's first movie, Sofia Coppola's first movie, Brad Bird's first movie, M. Night Shyamalan's big breakthrough—all these exciting new voices emerging, all coming from different places. Then you have these major directors coming back after at least a decade away: [Stanley] Kubrick, George Lucas, Terrence Malick. And then there's Michael Mann and David Fincher and Steven Soderbergh, all being handed the keys to the equivalent of these big muscle cars. It's like, 'So you say this movie *Fight Club* is going to be a nihilistic takedown of consumer culture, and you're going to blow up our corporate offices at the end of it? Okay, well, we can only give you $65 million to make that.'"

A MOVIE-DRUNK KID, RAFTERY THOUGHT EVERY OTHER MOVIE HE SAW IN 1999 WAS SOME KIND OF CINEMATIC MIRACLE. THING IS, SO DID EVERYONE ELSE.

How'd this happen? Raftery gives part of the credit to a generation of movie executives who started their careers during the New Hollywood era of the 1970s and whose decisions were informed as much by a genuine love of movies as by business savvy. Take Lorenzo di Bonaventura, who greenlit *Three Kings* and *The Matrix* when he was running Warner Bros., simply because he thought they were…you know, great ideas.

"I don't mean to deride them," Raftery says, "but with some of today's executives, I sometimes wonder, 'Was this what you really wanted to do when you were in college studying Hal Ashby movies?' That said, in 1999, the movie industry had a lot of money to waste. These movies did not feel like risks that would end everything. You could get something like *The Insider,* which had a budget of around $70 million, which is insane for a drama that is never going to have a sequel, and which you're never going to be able to spin off."

At the same time, Raftery resists the cliché that you could never get these movies made nowadays. He thinks they'd still survive, albeit in different forms. *The Iron Giant* would probably have a much easier time in 2019, for instance, now that skillfully told, heartfelt animated films in the Pixar mold have become a hugely profitable genre unto themselves.



Above: “Fight Club”; below: “Election”

Fight Club might not get the glossy treatment it did in 1999, but maybe a gnarlier, shot-on-digital version would still pack the same punch. *Magnolia* could stretch out its storytelling ambitions even further as a prestige series on HBO or Netflix. And *Being John Malkovich*? Well, that one always seemed like a fluke, even in 1999—Raftery says half-jokingly that he can imagine that premise in 2019 being boiled down to “a crazy, really well-made Cuervo ad.”

If any cluster of 1999’s movies seems uniquely of its time, Raftery thinks, it’s teen movies. He devotes a chapter to *Varsity Blues, She’s All That, American Pie, 10 Things I Hate About You,* and the gloriously trashy *Cruel Intentions*.

“Those were not the movies I grew up on,” Raftery admits, “but I have a lot of respect for them. They’re super-fun, but the fact that Columbine happened this year when teens had this remarkable pop-culture ascent is also very moving to me. Teen movies had to change after that, and this vacuum-sealed, pre-Columbine depiction of high school is very poignant when you watch it now.”

In 2016, Raftery wrote an article for *Wired* lamenting how movies no longer mattered as much as they had two decades ago. It wasn’t just that the most groundbreaking creative work seemed to be happening on television; even something as frivolous as *Pokémon Go* was sparking more engagement than whatever experiments Steven Soderbergh was cooking up at the time.

He doesn’t feel that way anymore. “I feel good about movies now,” he says. “In 2018 alone, you had *First Reformed, Black Panther,* and *Minding the Gap,* three movies with absolutely nothing in common—different budgets, different filmmaking styles, different audience ambitions—but all amazing. People always complain about franchises, but the thing is, *you don’t have to go see all of them.* If you just see the good ones, like *Black Panther* or *Mission: Impossible—Fallout,* you’re doing pretty good.”

Maybe, just maybe, the *true* “best movie year ever” is already underway and we just don’t know it yet. As Raftery notes, Hollywood sage William Goldman published an essay in *Premiere* early in 1999 decrying how movies had lost their way. “How many great movies do you need in a year, anyway?” Raftery asks. “In 1999, we might have had too many of them. In 2019, we might have exactly the right amount.”

Paul James is a playwright, editor, broadcaster, and a film and pop-culture commentator for such outlets as CBC Radio, Salon, and Eighteen Bridges magazine. He is the cohost of the podcast Trash, Art & the Movies. Follow him on Twitter @myelbow

PHOTOS BY JUSTIN GILBERT

EMILY VAUGHN

The budding pop sensation explains her very Gen-Z rise to fame.

BY MISH BARBER-WAY

POP star Emily Vaughn has a love/hate relationship with social media.

The 24-year-old Florida native was recently in Hawaii trying to unplug from a busy life in Los Angeles when she looked at her phone and instantly regretted it.

Checking social media, she came across a post that brought all her anxieties to the surface. Another up-and-coming pop star had released a single with the same title as one of Vaughn's songs. Its cachet was lost.

"I do struggle with depression and anxiety, and being on social media can make it even more difficult," the singer admits. "There's always something to compare yourself to. My generation are the guinea pigs of how this tool will affect our mental health."

"Coming from a town of 30,000 people, I never imagined I could actually be a pop singer," Vaughn says. "No one in my town was doing things like that."

She was writing songs, though, sitting on her bedroom floor with her guitar or perched at the piano, her voice memo app on. Soon, she started putting the music online, hoping to catch the attention of some industry insider. Eventually, she was discovered by a music manager who flew her out to L.A. for a meet and greet. It went well (obviously), and Vaughn moved west in 2017.

Her singles have popped online, gathering a whopping three million-plus listens on Spotify. She's been praised by *Nylon, Interview,* and *V* magazines for her infectious, daring hooks and lyrics that mix emotion with tongue-in-cheek humor that come off sweet as honey.

"IT'S IRONIC I'M BITCHING ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA," VAUGHN SAYS, "BECAUSE I OWE MY WHOLE CAREER TO THE INTERNET."

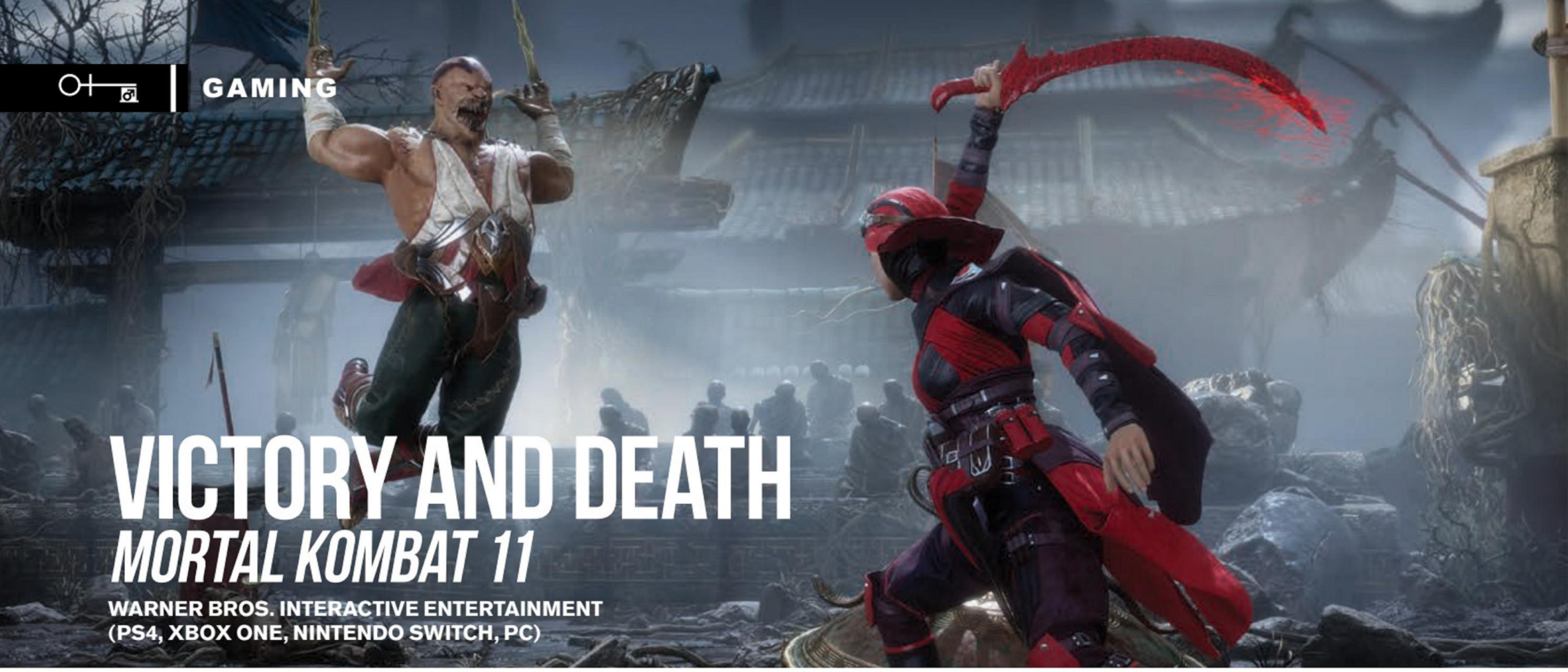
Like most in Gen Z would, Vaughn took to Instagram to write about her feelings. She tapped out a long message about anxiety, depression, and mental health. She posted it, closed her phone, and felt relief.

"It's ironic I'm bitching about social media," Vaughn says, "because I owe my whole career to the internet."

She grew up on Merritt Island, near Cape Canaveral, with a musical mother who also taught visual art. Vaughn and her sister played piano and guitar, and sang, often performing in school musicals and choir.

Her debut EP, *Bitch Bops,* dropped in April, and soon she'll be hitting the road for her first American tour. For now, though, she's thriving off the loving fans who slide into her DMs and let her know that her music has brightened what had been a shitty day.

"I have a spin to my music that is vulnerable yet cocky," she says. "I want people to listen to my music and feel as confident and excited as I did while writing it. When fans reach out to me and say that my music makes them feel like that, I'm so happy."



VICTORY AND DEATH

MORTAL KOMBAT 11

WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT
(PS4, XBOX ONE, NINTENDO SWITCH, PC)

AT times it was dark, at times it was wacky, at times it was sensationalized by U.S. senators, but the *Mortal Kombat* fighting-game franchise always had a lot of heart—and livers and kidneys and other assorted organs splattered across its arenas thanks to spine-exposing Fatalities. This eleventh installment injects more story and character into the gory spectacle that made these games so terrifying to parents and politicians. For the first time in the franchise's history, a female kombatant hurls foes through the glass ceiling to become the final boss, a time-warping mystery woman named Kronika. Although you can't choose her as a kombatant, you have access to the time-reversing powers of Geras, her right-hand bad hombre. Most of the classic fighters—including chain-chucking Scorpion, toothy Outworld warrior Baraka, and frosty-eyed Sub Zero—return, while Sonya Blade gets a personality makeover in the form of her new performance-capture actress, MMA she-warrior Ronda Rousey. Each character has a wide range of outfits and weapons you can unlock for bragging rights in online matches.

Of course, the big attraction here is the visceral combat, revamped and ramped up until the gore just ruins your fighter's fine washables. Finishing-move Fatalities reach new heights of heinousness, including eviscerations and dismemberments portrayed with astonishing anatomical accuracy. New moves add some balance to the brutality. Players whose health dips within a foot of the grave can unleash new Fatal Blows—unique for each character—to help stage a comeback. Krushing Blows add cinematic flair on par with Fatalities without actually ending the round. Block enough attacks with the right timing and you enter a Flawless Block mode that makes you unstoppable for a short period of time. With these new mechanics in the repertoire, the series continues its evolution from shallow and sensational into a deeply strategic fighter with an extra-chunky layer of viscera.

ODDLY COMPELLING: GAMES THAT PLAY BY THEIR OWN RULES

> 4 <

DEVIL MAY CRY 5

(CAPCOM, PS4, XBOX ONE, PC)

Everything that made this action series so tragically hip returns in this eccentric sequel, including a supernatural family of demonic antiheroes and stylized graphics right out of *Dante's Inferno*. New combat moves incorporate motorcycles, bionic arms, and a bloodthirsty hat to ramp up the absurdity. No wonder this series has possessed so many fans.

> 3 <

RAGE 2

(BETHESDA, PS4, XBOX ONE, PC)

Wannabe road warriors who wished their driving games had more shooting reach for this apocalyptic first-person blaster from the genre's progenitors, id Software. Strap into a dune buggy and lead convoys across a near-future wasteland ruled by slavering gangs of the chromosomal deficient and a totalitarian government that kindly requests your surrender.

> 2 <

TROPICO 6

(KALYPSO MEDIA, PS4, XBOX ONE, PC)

AA strategy games with a ruthless twist, *Tropico* puts you in the Panama Jack shades of El Presidente, a ruthless dictator of his own banana republic. In this time-tripping sequel, you establish your tin-pot dictatorship on a string of islands while appropriating cultural bling in the form of stolen landmarks, from the Statue of Liberty to the Eiffel Tower.

> 1 <

SHENMUE III

(DEEP SILVER, PS4, PC)

No series goes deeper into its own rabbit hole than *Shenmue*, a classic adventure featuring a teenage martial artist looking for his lost father in 1980s China. The first two games delivered a nearly bottomless pit of period-accurate details and diversions, including pachinko parlors and forklift races should your hero decide to take a day job in construction. This crowdfunded sequel completes the vision of legendary eccentric designer Yu Suzuki.

PENTHOUSE LETTERS.COM

Our readers' exotic sexcapades brought to life...

VOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

The subterranean secrets of Lord John Bentinck's English Country Home

BY MICHAEL HINGSTON

LET'S start with a simple but important point: All was not right in the mind of William John Cavendish-Scott-Bentinck, an introvert and eccentric *par excellence* who built an elaborate tunnel system under his sprawling Victorian estate all so he didn't have to talk to other people.

The fifth Duke of Portland, aka the Marquess of Titchfield, aka Lord John Bentinck, was a man of prestige. He was a captain in the British Army, as well as a politician who served in multiple houses of government. This was not the result of a particularly strong intellect or work ethic, but, rather, rarified socioeconomic stock: His grandfather, William Henry, served two terms as British prime minister, and Bentinck's entry to the House of Lords was literally automatic when he inherited the dukedom at age 24, upon his older brother's premature death.

> THE MORAL OF LORD BENTINCK'S STORY IS THE SAME AS IT EVER WAS: NO MATTER YOUR SOCIAL DEFECTS, WHEN YOU'RE OBSCENELY WEALTHY, YOU CAN DO PRETTY MUCH WHATEVER YOU WANT.

From a young age, Bentinck suffered from the Victorian catchall known as "delicate health." He quit the army on account of lethargy, and gave up his seat as MP (to his uncle, naturally) after just a couple of years on the job. Years later, in 1854, when he became the Duke of Portland, it took Bentinck a full three years just to take his oath and officially join the House of Lords.

Bentinck's ill health appears to have gone hand in hand with his crippling social anxiety. While he was known for his private skills as a hunter and judge of horses, in public Bentinck struggled to get along with others. As the years went on, he turned more and more of his attention to Welbeck Abbey, his grand country house in North Nottinghamshire. The estate itself dated back to the twelfth century, but when Bentinck lived there, little of the original abbey remained—and by the time he was done with it, the estate would be a completely different animal.

On the grounds themselves, Bentinck oversaw the construction of an immense riding house that could hold a hundred horses, as well as a vast kitchen garden that included a thousand-foot-long wall just for growing and ripening peaches; when roller skating became a trendy leisure activity, he built an entire rink for his staff to use.

But the real story at Welbeck Abbey happened underground, as Bentinck commissioned a vast network of subterranean tunnels and corridors, the largest of which was wide enough for two carriages to pass side by side and led toward the closest town, which was several miles away. He also built a series of specialty rooms underground, including a library, a billiards room, and a 10,000-square-foot ballroom. In all, the work took nearly two decades to complete, and required a significant workforce not just to build it, but also to maintain it for the years to come.

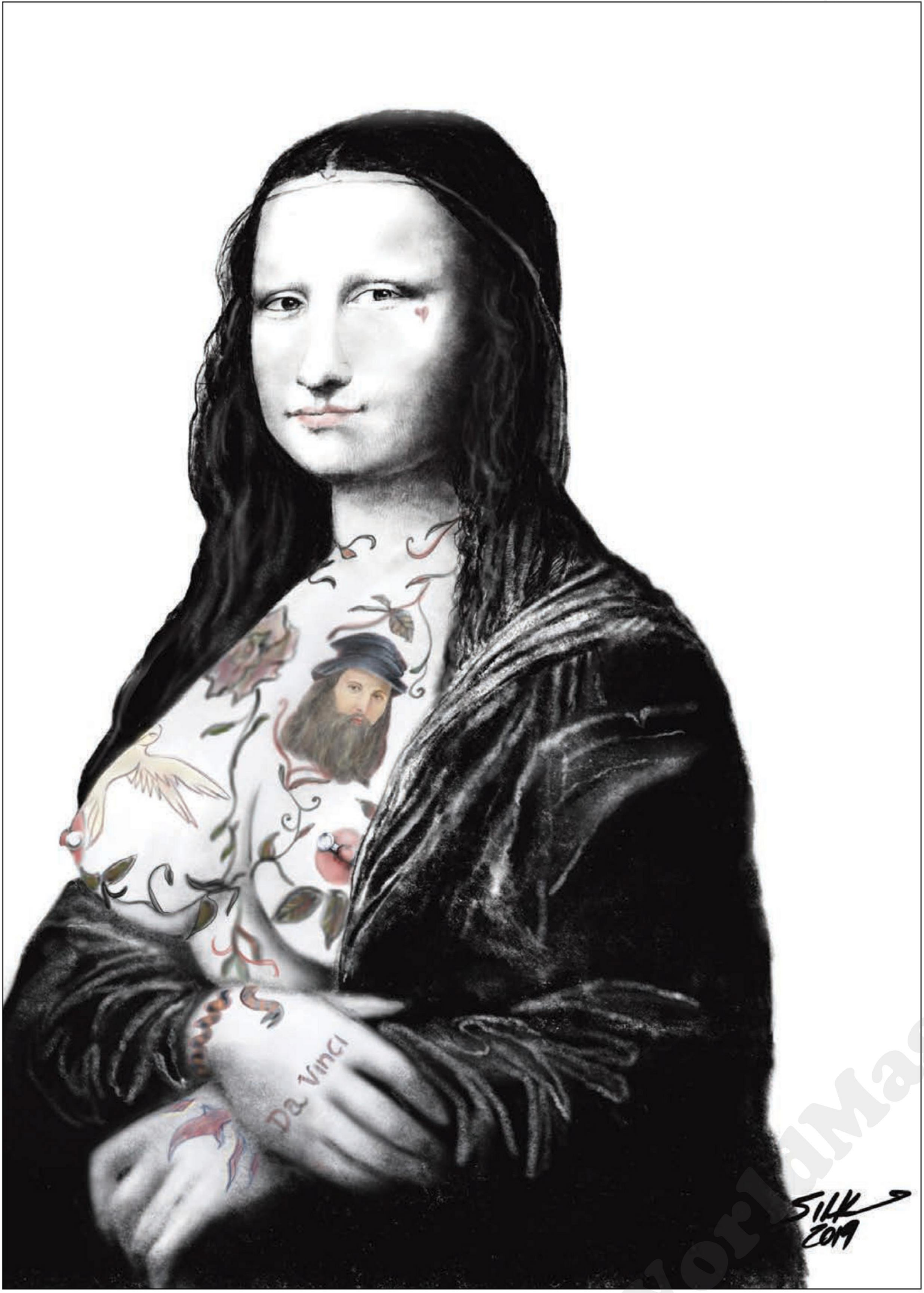
Why did he do this? We don't really know, but it sure wasn't for the benefit of his guests—because he didn't have any. Bentinck lived on his own and did not make a habit of inviting people over. He did, however, enjoy the quiet life in the countryside, and personally attended routine chores like emptying the lake and feeding the deer that roamed the estate. As he got older, Bentinck retreated even further from public life, occupying just a few of the many rooms in Welbeck Abbey and avoiding speaking directly even to his staff. According to some accounts, Bentinck carried around an umbrella to hide behind just in case someone tried to address him directly.

Bentinck was an odd guy—likely with some undiagnosed or at least untreated mental-health issues—and his biography comes with an equally odd coda. In 1896, nearly 20 years after his death at age 79, a woman came forward to claim that Bentinck had led a double life and was, in fact, her father-in-law. The woman petitioned the government for years to exhume her father-in-law's coffin, which she believed would be empty. By the time the coffin was eventually dug up, where it was found to indeed contain the correct body, the woman had been committed to a mental institution.

The moral of Bentinck's story is the same as it ever was: No matter your social defects, when you're obscenely wealthy, you can do pretty much whatever you want.

Michael Hingston is a writer in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. His new book is "Let's Go Exploring," a history and analysis of the comic strip Calvin and Hobbes.

MONA LISA'S VIBE *By James Silk*


Da Vinci
SILK
2019

CRAZY RICH OWNERS

The five most eccentric team-owning plutocrats in sports.

BY PHIL HANRAHAN

MY first exposure to the weirdness of rich people happened when I was kid, leafing through the *Guinness Book of World Records* paperback I'd requested for Christmas. I came upon an entry for "The World's Greatest Miser," Hetty Green. The photo showed an elderly woman dressed all in black, with a big black hat and a cape, striding grim-faced along a New York City street in the 1890s.

And then I learned a few wackadoodle details about the woman nicknamed "The Witch of Wall Street." Though she'd inherited five million dollars when her whaling empire dad died, she was so cheap she hardly ever washed her hands to save money on soap, bought broken cookies at bargain prices, and cooked her oatmeal over a hot radiator during winter when making breakfast at the bank where she spent her days investing.

She nearly lost her mind once when she thought she'd lost a two-cent stamp.

Hetty Green marked the beginning of my education into monied eccentricity. Crazy rich people grow on trees. There was the Eighth Earl of Bridgewater, Francis Egerton, also in the nineteenth century, a dude who only wore a pair of shoes once, and threw dinner parties for himself and dogs dressed up in fashionable human-style clothes.

There was Sarah Winchester, who married into the Winchester gun company fortune and built an insane, seven-story, 161-room California mansion with doors and stairs that went nowhere and other oddities meant to fool the ghosts of people killed by Winchester firearms she believed haunted her.

Howard Hughes comes to mind. The aviation tycoon had severe OCD, and once spent four months holed up in a Hollywood studio screening room watching movies, often naked, not cutting his hair, surrounded by Kleenex boxes, and consuming only chicken, chocolate, and milk. Even the IKEA founder, Ingvar Kamprad, seemed a bit nuts—or at least cheap enough to give Hetty a run for her money. A Swede who drove a 1993 Volvo as recently as 2013, when he was one of the world's richest men, Kamprad pocketed restaurant salt and pepper packets and reused tea bags. He furnished his house with IKEA furniture he assembled himself.

"The rich are different from you and me," F. Scott Fitzgerald was reputed to have said to his drinking buddy Ernest Hemingway, who replied, "Yes, they have more money."

Given the fact that wealthy people own professional sports teams, basic probability would tell you that a number of team owners are or have been...a little different from you and me. And not only because they have access to boatloads of cash.

Different in the head.

Here are my candidates for the five wackiest owners in sports.

CHARLIE FINLEY

During the seventies, when colorful, bombastic George Steinbrenner commenced his lengthy ownership tenure for the New York Yankees, colorful, bombastic Charlie Finley owned the Oakland A's, a team that won three straight World Series championships—a feat repeated only one other time, when Steinbrenner's Yankees did it between 1998 and 2000.

And, like Steinbrenner, Finley was always firing people and feuding with players. But whereas "The Boss," as Steinbrenner was known in Yankee Stadium, banned beards and shoulder-length hair (he once ordered Don Mattingly benched for not cutting his mullet), Finley encouraged facial hair—even zany facial hair—paying players $300 bonuses to grow mustaches during the postseason.

CHARLIE FINLEY ENCOURAGED FACIAL HAIR—EVEN ZANY FACIAL HAIR—PAYING PLAYERS $300 BONUSES TO GROW MUSTACHES DURING THE POSTSEASON.

The practice led to pitcher Rollie Fingers growing his signature handlebar 'stache. Charlie Finley was even nuttier than Steinbrenner. Take it from outfielder-turned-broadcaster Jimmy Piersall, afflicted with bipolar disorder, who once said of Finley's craziness, "Being around him made me feel well."

An innovator who advocated for the designated hitter, interleague play, and nighttime World Series games, Finley had a P. T. Barnum-level flair for marketing, which is where he let his freak flag fly. He introduced a new team mascot, "Charlie-O," a mule, which he paraded through the press room, hotel lobbies, and cocktail parties. He jazzed up team uniforms, going with bright green,

PHOTO: SONPICHIT SALANGSING / SHUTTERSTOCK

gold, and white. He insisted players wear white cleats. He tried orange baseballs during spring training. He hired the future rapper MC Hammer as an eleven-year-old to serve as a dancing batboy. He installed a mechanical rabbit behind home plate that popped up to hand the umpire baseballs. He pioneered ball girls (one of them Debbi Fields, who founded Mrs. Fields' Original Cookies), and oversaw Hot Pants Night (free admission for women in short shorts), along with promotions for bald and bearded fans.

MARK CUBAN

This motormouthed, T-shirt-wearing, non-graduate of anger management classes has been the loosest of cannons since assuming ownership of the Dallas Mavericks in 2000. His propensity to yell at players and refs, and say stuff he shouldn't in interviews, has led to a whopping $1.6 million in league fines. Small change for a guy *Forbes* said had a 2018 net worth of $3.9 billion. A onetime disco dancing instructor, Cuban, who made his money in tech and media, has called Donald Trump a "jagoff" and once offered to pay him a million dollars to shave his head. He allegedly said, "Your son is a punk" to Kenyon Martin's mom after a game. He's entered a pro-wrestling ring. He says he might run for president some day.

Is he nuts? Well, maybe not certifiably, but he's a grade-A eccentric. His superstar player Dirk Nowitzki once said, "He needs to learn how to control himself a little better." Four years earlier, Cuban claimed an NBA supervising ref "couldn't manage a Dairy Queen." Before long, Cuban was managing a small-town Texas DQ for a day, on the company's invitation.

MIKHAIL PROKHOROV

Nicknamed a "Mutant Russian Mark Cuban" by Bill Simmons, six-foot-eight Prokhorov, who made his fortune in precious metals, has owned or co-owned the Nets since 2010. Last year he had a net worth of $9.2 billion, according to *Forbes*. Owner of two private jets, a 200-foot yacht, an island in the Maldives, a $140,000 watch, and a Kalashnikov rifle designed for Russian special forces, this womanizing bachelor, now 53, enjoys the hell out of life. He works out for two hours a day and likes doing backflips while waterskiing. Freakishly coordinated, he can balance on a volleyball. When the *New York Times* visited him in Moscow, he showed the reporter how he could snap his leg with a kick. "I come in peace," he deadpanned at his first Nets press conference, his Russian accent thick.

"Mikhail is right up there with the most flamboyant owners the league has ever had," said then-NBA commissioner David Stern when Prokhorov took over the Nets.

JIM IRSAY

A Bill Walton-ish child of the sixties, with a love for the Beatles, The Who, Neil Young, and Bob Dylan, Irsay, owner of the Indianapolis Colts, is a billionaire with slicked-back hair who for years wore a silver Van Dyke beard. In 2014, he was arrested for drunk driving and possession of controlled substances (a bunch of tranquilizers). Nothing if not colorful, Irsay owns the original Jack Kerouac manuscript for *On the Road* (a 120-foot-long scroll of taped-together paper), as well as a Ringo Starr drum set and guitars once owned by John Lennon and Elvis. He runs the best team-owner Twitter account in sports. Here he is in 2012, jabbing at Cowboys owner Jerry Jones after a TV camera caught Jones's son-in-law cleaning the owner's glasses: "I hired 'The Gimp' from Pulp Fiction 2 clean my reading glasses; he lives in a trap door in my Owners Suite, but also does my grocery shopping." Long may you run, Mr. Irsay.

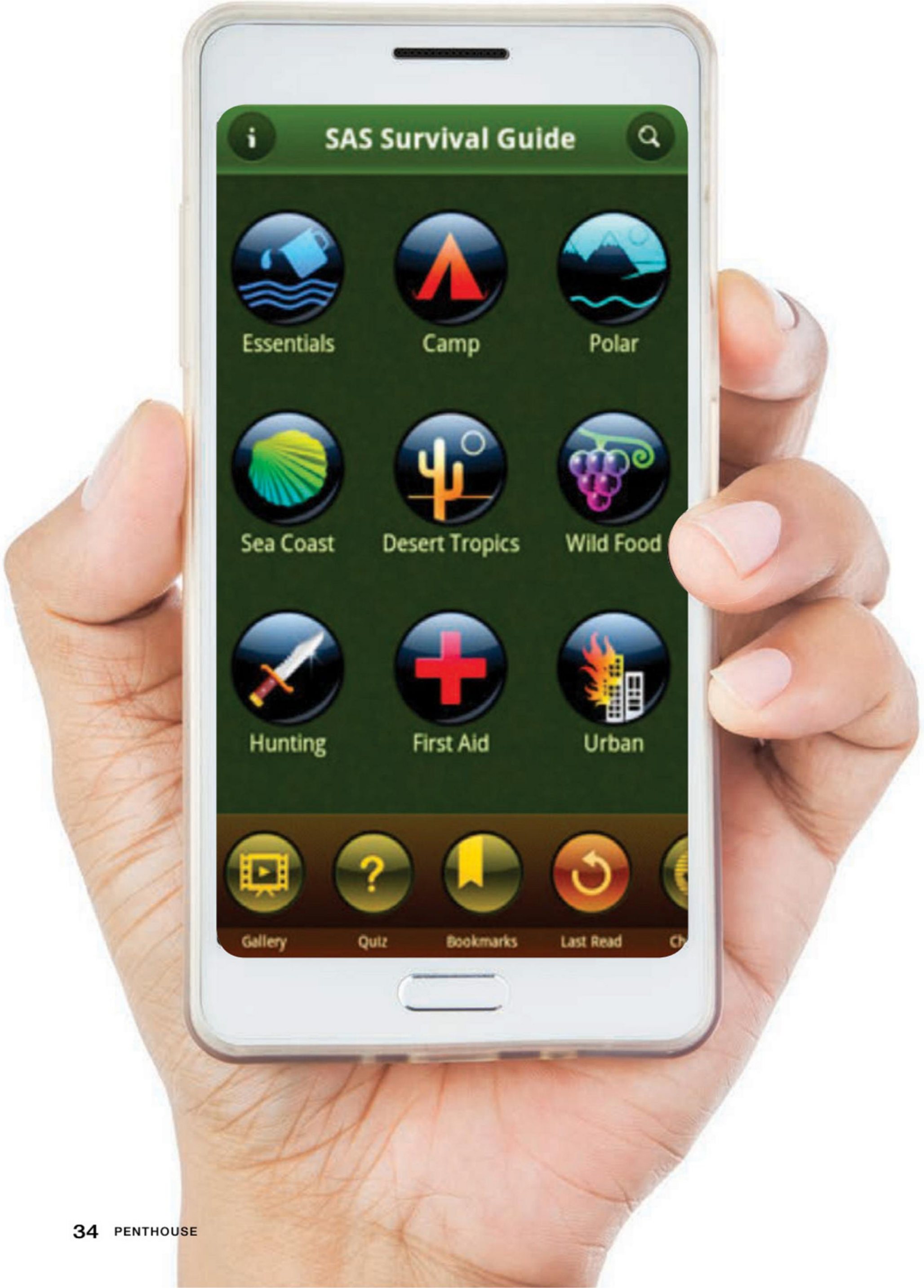
SILVIO BERLUSCONI

The longest-serving postwar Italian prime minister, a media mogul worth more than $8 billion, and a kind of Italian Trump when it comes to braggadocio and love of beautiful women, the 82-year-old Berlusconi owned the world-class AC Milan professional soccer club for 31 years, all the way into 2017.

This endlessly corrupt Teflon politician has endured multiple court cases, been arrested for sex with an underage Moroccan belly dancer, participated in orgies, bragged of getting it on with eight women in one night, and once was caught on camera simulating the humping of a policewoman from behind. The number of sexist things Berlusconi has said could fill Jack Kerouac's "scroll" and more. The man's a piece of work. ⊶

ECCENTRIC YET ESSENTIAL APPS YOU NEED ON YOUR PHONE NOW

Pack your phone with these crucial apps—even if they seem a bit out there.



BARSTOOL SPORTS ONE BITE

onebite.com

No matter where you are in the world, this app will get the best slice of pizza into your hand as fast as you can get your ass to the restaurant. One Bite was spawned from a video series hosted by Barstool Sports' Dave "El Presidente" Portnoy, a guy who developed a cult following for his live pizza-review videos. This hot app not only offers a pizza maven's map to the best slice in town, but all 430-plus of Dave's review videos.

SAS SURVIVAL GUIDE

sassurvivalguide.com

This survival guide app grew out of a popular book written by a special-forces trainer preparing you for everything you need to know when confronted with real-life *holy shit!* situations. The app is your friend when you need primers on stuff from hunting to first aid to wild plants you can eat. It's kind of like Tom Brown for the twenty-first century. (And if you don't know who Tom Brown is, then you definitely need to get this app.)

URBAN DADDY

urbandaddy.com

The Urban Daddy app is your own personal pocket concierge. Just plunk in what day you'll be in search of entertainment, dining, or a killer bar, what time, what city, what kind of beverage or food, and who you'll be going with. Urban Daddy does the rest.

SLEEP CYCLE

sleepcycle.com

Sometimes it can feel like we're running on steam and a shoestring. Good sleep is crucial, and we need to prioritize it. Sleep Cycle tracks your sleeping heart rate as well as the quality of your sleep, and even has an alarm designed to wake you up only during the lightest part of your morning slumber.

VSCO

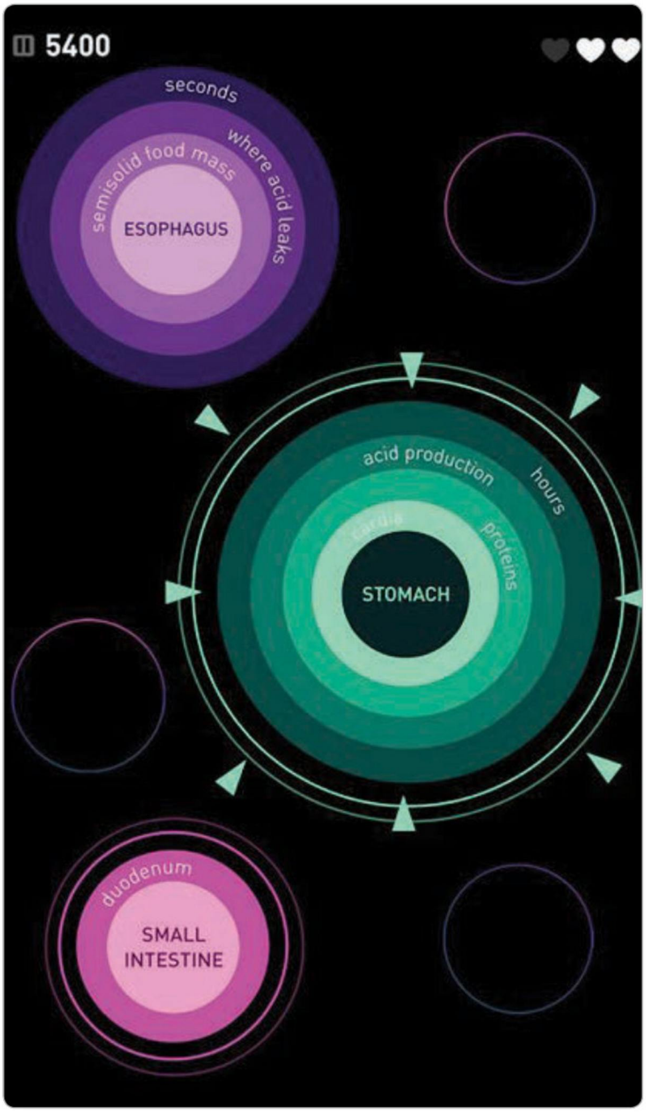
vsco.com

This critically acclaimed photography app lets you edit your images into masterpieces that belong on some thot's latest Instagram shoot. VSCO is like your other editing apps, but the quality is off the chain. Plus, they have their own social media community to share your work with.

ELEVATE

elevateapp.com

A brain-training app, Elevate is designed to help improve your overall processing speed, memory, attention span, and more. It's got a database of over 40 mind-melting games created by experts. Get your cognitive skills back in shape instead of checking your Twitter feed for the eighteenth time today.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SMALL INTESTINE

MY FITNESS PAL

myfitnesspal.com

Are you looking to shape up and slim down? Here's the best app going for both encouraging you during workouts and tracking what you eat. The vast database of foods makes logging your daily intake simple, and the app also keeps track of recent meals and recipes you've enjoyed for speedy retrieval. Upgrade to premium and MyFitnessPal helps you set daily nutrition goals and stay on track.

RAFT

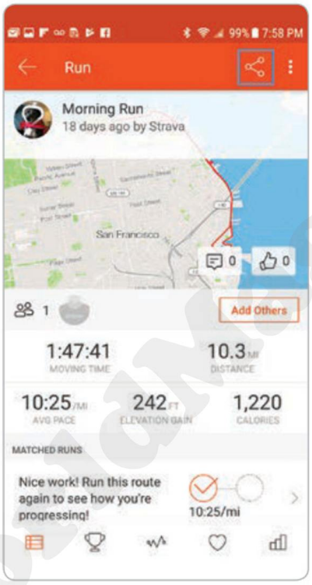
raft.com

Coordinating your own work schedule can be taxing enough, let alone trying to make that schedule swing with your partner's crazy life. The most brutal thing you can do to your girl is blow it when it comes to date night, or any other special occasion she's been reminding you about. Avoid the pain and suffering with Raft, a scheduling app that links up your time tables so the two of you are sure to never miss a beat. Raft color-coordinates everyone's plans and ensures a fight-free evening. We know it sounds like a big "duh," but this app is a savior for those of us who are busy as hell and occasionally forgetful.

STRAVA

strava.com

Runners, cyclists, and triathletes–this app is screaming your name. Strava has branded itself as the social network for outdoor athletes, and for good reason. This app (which is compatible with most GPS watches and fitness trackers) analyzes your heart rate and power output, giving you the max amount of information to analyze your performance. Go premium and you also get coaching programs, live feedback on your activity, as well as a function called Beacon that allows you to share your location and workouts in real time with other users, creating a strong community of fitness fanatics ready to pump one another up all the way to the next run.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Nice work! Run this route again to see how you're progressing!

HAND HOLDING PHONE PHOTO: MILY FROST / SHUTTERSTOCK

THE VAULT

First Class

OUR October 1984 Pet of the Month, Marie Ehlman, was no shrinking violet. After all, she posed naked on top of an airplane with a massive python for iconic photographer Earl Miller. Marie was a trained equestrian who'd dreamed of being a centerfold since she was a nerdy teenager with braces. We're still grateful this stunning risk-taker got her shot in the limelight.

Kawasaki

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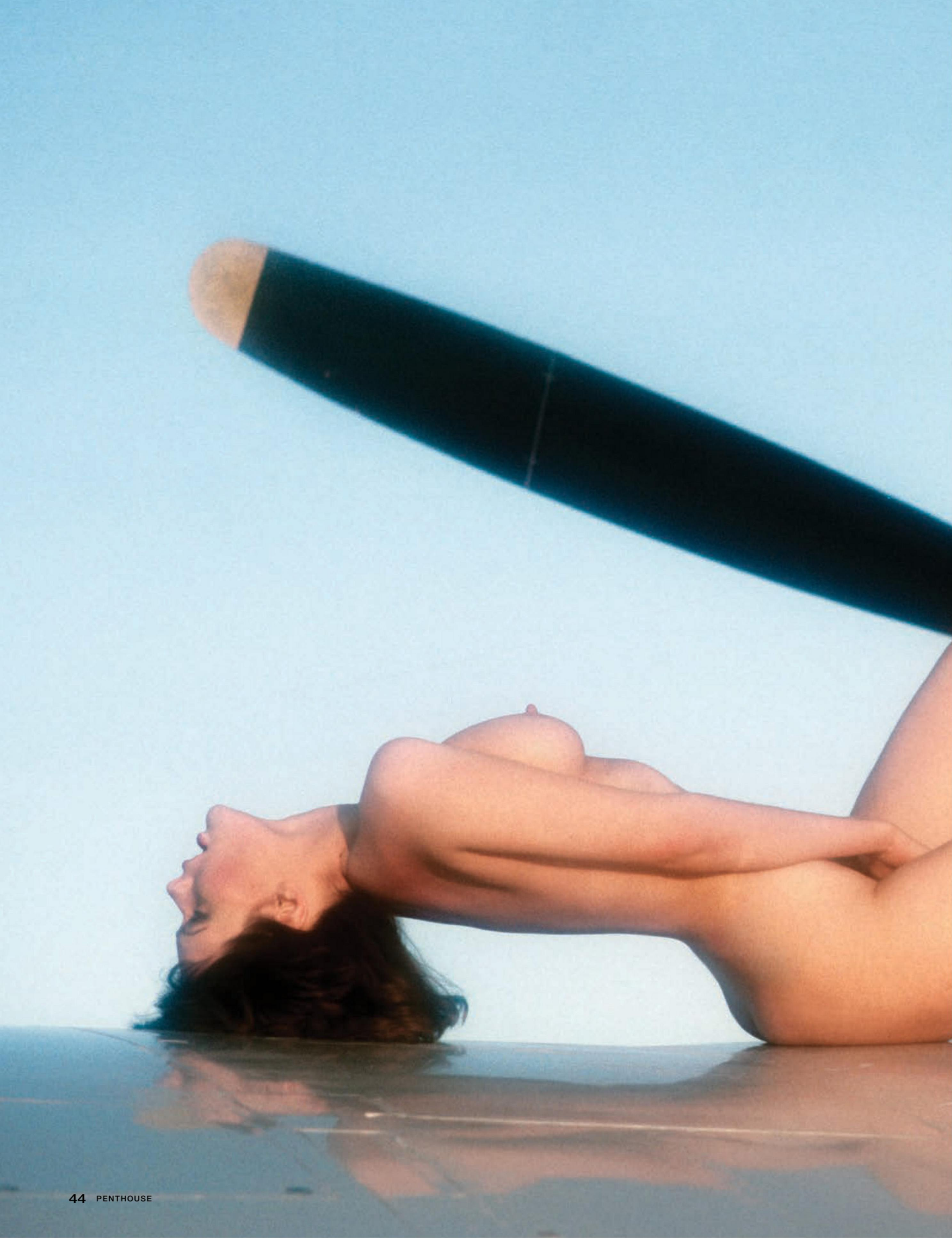
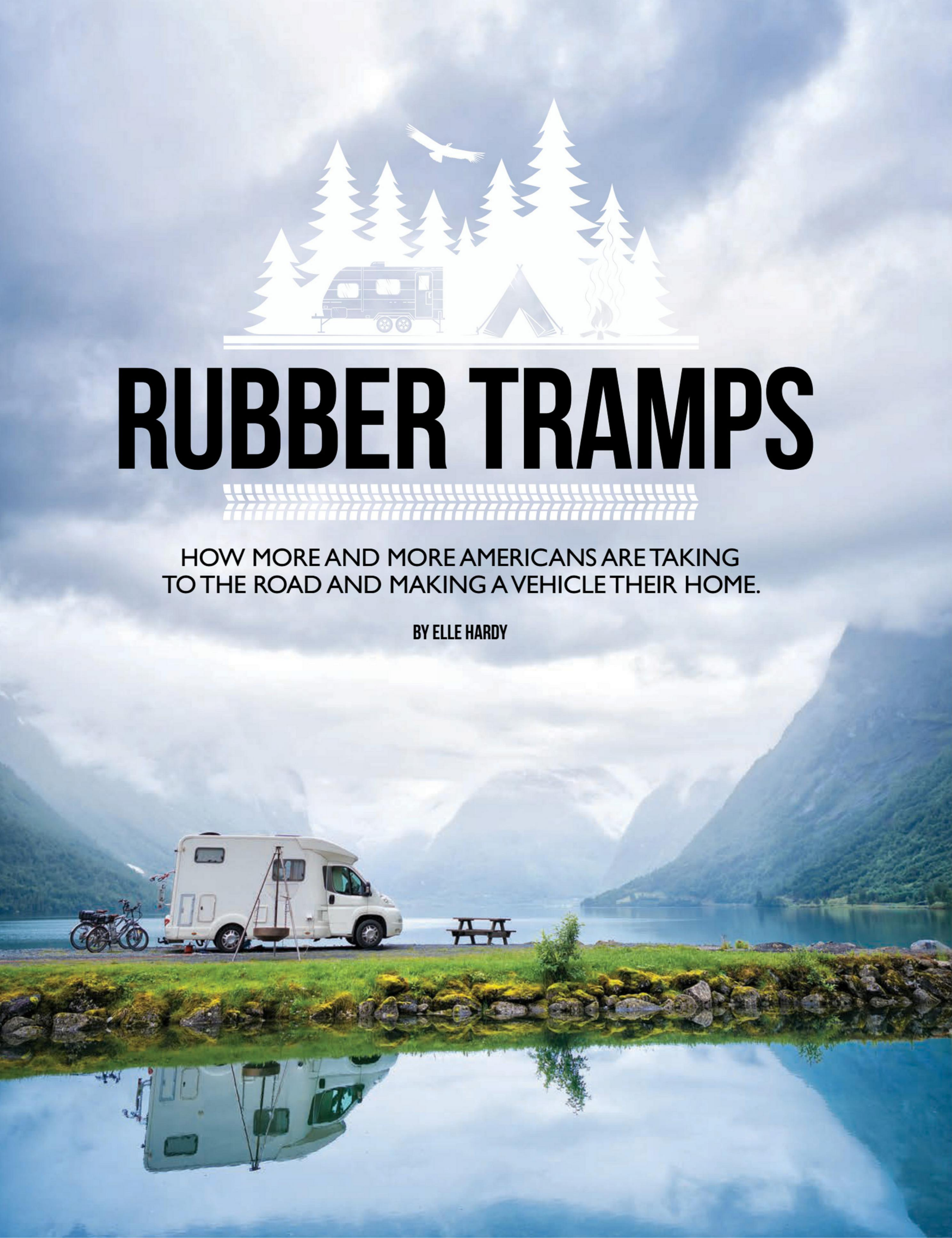


RUBBER TRAMPS

HOW MORE AND MORE AMERICANS ARE TAKING TO THE ROAD AND MAKING A VEHICLE THEIR HOME.

BY ELLE HARDY



THERE'S a fireball sunset blazing on the western horizon of Arizona's Sonoran Desert. As a cool January dusk settles over this ashy plain outside the town of Quartzsite, two hours west of Phoenix on Interstate 10, I'm sitting before a campfire in this infinite land, being initiated into a tribe I only recently discovered but which has welcomed me.

All around us in the fading light, between the saguaro cactuses and creosote bushes, are a few thousand vehicles—our homes. We're nomads. We're people from all walks of life, from all over the country, who have chosen to remain in motion and live out of our campers and vans, our converted box trucks and school buses, our road-warrior RVs, and even our cars, the smallest of these mobile dwellings.

We've gathered for the tenth installment of the Rubber Tramp Rendezvous, a convocation of highway roamers—"rubber tramps"—that began in 2010 with just 45 attendees, but now nearly doubles the 3,500-resident population of Quartzsite during its two-week run.

Pre-Rendezvous, Quartzsite, the "Rock Capital of the World," had been known for its winter gem and mineral shows, a desert mecca for rock hobbyists. But for those seated around this campfire, as well as for our neighbors inside or outside their vehicles, it's this annual encampment that put the town, not far from the California border, on the map.

THE COMING TOGETHER OF ROAD-HARDENED MISFITS SHOWS THE INCREASINGLY IMAGINATIVE LENGTHS TO WHICH PEOPLE WILL GO TO BE FREE, IN THE LAND WHERE FREEDOM IS SUPPOSED TO BE A GIVEN.

It's time for campfire introductions. "Elle, wandering writer, gray Toyota Sienna," I say on a rapidly cooling evening. More brief bios pour forth from trampers accustomed to meeting others on the road and sketching their lives in a few words.

Julia is a freelance social worker and lifestyle "minimalist." Easy is an itinerant agriculture worker, father to a pit bull. Brad is an unemployed van dweller. Polly Rose—whom I immediately decide is fabulous—is a full-time trailer tramp. Tabi? A former B-movie actress and free spirit. Jon is a grieving father. Hollywood is a rock hound, an amateur geologist. Footloose and house-free, J.J. and her partner Kevin are classic twenty-first-century rubber tramps.

With the country in the midst of the longest shutdown in government history, we've been left to our own devices on this tract of federal land. Not that it matters—America shut down for most of us a long time ago. The coming together, here, of road-hardened misfits shows the increasingly imaginative, and dedicated, lengths to which people will go to be free, in the land where freedom is supposed to be a given.

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MORE and more Americans are living in their cars. I am one of them.

In early 2018, I was trying to scratch together a living as a writer when a friend (who too often sheltered me) passed along YouTube videos of people converting old vans into something resembling tiny homes. Over the past ten years, a new breed of hobos and dreamers emerged from the Great Recession that hit in 2008. Like our freight-hopping forebears, rubber tramps have taken to roaming America on wheels, looking for work, kinship, or simply trying to outrun despair.

My sometime partner, Joseph S. Furey—a writer and veteran freight hopper himself—was similarly crisscrossing the country on his own steam. He offered me a simple, conceptual sleight of hand to help me on my way: You can't be homeless if you consider the road your home.

For two weeks, this nowhere land outside of Quartzsite is the closest thing we have to a settled living situation. And my next-door tramper, Polly Rose, 63, is intent on creating a temporary neighborhood. Our nightly campfire circle takes place in front of her battered trailer, which she'd unwittingly driven the last 50 miles on two blown rear tires. Polly had taken to the country's interstate system as a way of cleansing her life, and escaping the elements of herself that she fears she has passed onto her children.

"I just had enough," she says, rolling a prodigious joint laced with peppermint oil for an uncertain health benefit. "I did as much as I could, and I left."

Polly Rose ditched her husband's last name—her *wasband,* she calls him—bought some new teeth, and rented out her house on the proviso that her alcoholic son could move into the basement. The small trailer that's now her home is papered in aphorisms and love notes. Beneath her bed, which occupies much of the vehicle, she keeps bags of wigs, tutus, and tiaras, and as the winter sun sets, she pulls out these bags for our benefit.

Every night we gather for the same ritual. We play dress-up, I suspect, so that Polly Rose can learn to be herself again. Around midnight, we stumble from the dying fire across the desert washes to the white tents of Party-R, a disco encampment that to Polly Rose represents a Shangri-la she knows is out there waiting for her.

For others in our lot, the very existence of Quartzsite is oasis enough. Along with its rock reputation, the town calls itself the world's boondocking capital. ("Boondocking" is a word for camping out in your RV.) Some two million road warriors pass through in non-summer months.

For everything we lack, we trampers are rich in beliefs—and perhaps more importantly, we have a faith in beliefs.

Our nightly campfire smokes out everyone's life philosophies, wisdom sources, rituals, and theories. People share encouraging epigrams, and speak of credence in the ability to manifest small riches (such as a cheap camper) into being, and the inherent goodness of the universe. Some cite the golden rule. The power of positive thinking. Tarot cards. Mushroom hallucinations to take you into a past life. Constellation therapy. Chemtrails. Gong therapy. People share their views of God, too, if they believe in God. It's a grab bag of perspectives.

When you live on the road, an openness to belief helps keep you going, especially when it enables self-belief. And when you're living in your car, self-belief is key.

PHOTO: ANDREY ARMYAGOV / SHUTTERSTOCK

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY SIMONA PILOLLA 2

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY VIEW APART

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THERE are three types of rubber tramps at this gathering: those who are here by necessity, those who had enough life stability to make the choice to come, and those who tramp as an ongoing lifestyle. The latter are the snowbirds—well-off Northerners escaping the winter cold in RVs the size of tour buses. They populate the local motor home parks, equipped with electric and water hookups, scattered around town. The rest of us "dry camp"—meaning we set up shop without hookups—for free in the rocky outskirts governed by the Bureau of Land Management. Jon and Hollywood have already been out here for months, hoping to find themselves a Polly Rose to ward off loneliness.

The dry campers in our group have nomadism in common, but there's some variety in our "homes." If Polly Rose's trailer is basically a steel shell for her bed, my minivan offers even tighter quarters. The cargo area is exactly seven-and-a-half feet with the back seats taken out. Still, it's big enough to hold a full-size mattress topper, my belongings, and a portable bucket toilet.

I call my van Dapple after Sancho Panza's donkey, deciding it's the companion to Rocinante, John Steinbeck's name—inspired by Don Quixote's horse—for his overloaded camper truck in his 1960 best seller, *Travels With Charley*. The aging novelist and his dog, a standard poodle, set off in search of the "real" America, if there was ever such a thing.

My Dapple is a faithful beast, which I equipped for the road as best as I could. I studied YouTube videos detailing this kind of vehicle makeover created by Bob Wells, the 63-year-old spiritual leader of trampers and founder of the Rendezvous. Per his instruction, I shaped sheets of silver Reflectix to my windows for insulation and privacy, painting one side black so as to not draw attention to my van wherever I stopped at night.

I ROLLED OUT FOR A LIFE TOURING A LAND OF INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS, STRIP MALL PARKING LOTS, AND OVERLIT TRUCK STOPS, AND ONE REQUIRING NO PERMIT FOR ENTRY, JUST A HOMEY STEEL VEHICLE.

Further touches for my foil-lined crib are equally practical. I bought bedsheets the color of red wine, boxed red wine itself, cans of mac and cheese, Mace, a knife, and a bottle of extra strong sleeping tablets. An Australia native, I rolled out for a life touring a realm inside my adopted country—a land of interstate highways, strip mall parking lots, and overlit truck stops, and one requiring no permit for entry, just a homey steel vehicle.

Though I'd become a tramp out of economic necessity, I'd come to believe I was earning my living, such as it was, writing about a country I wasn't sure I fully understood, and I wanted to learn more. John Steinbeck set out to discover what Americans were like at the start of the sixties, his instincts telling him that the country he'd been chronicling for decades was on the cusp of great change. My project was a little less grand: I wanted to explore some of the things about America we weren't being told.

* * *

ON my second day in Quartzsite, a new neighbor joins the fold. Joni, 61, is a refugee from Paradise, California. Back in November, as her hometown fell prey to one of America's worst wildfires in a century, Joni's uninsured home turned to ashes.

"When [the fires] came, there were four exit points, and we were supposed to be evacuating zone by zone," she remembers. "But one of the zones was immediately engulfed in flames. There were embers everywhere, and then Paradise was all on fire at once. People couldn't get out of their neighborhoods for the traffic jams. They were running out of gas in the gridlock on the roads. People were dying in their cars."

Joni's hair is tied back with a repaired elastic; her face carries enough exhaustion for two. A longtime pet rescuer, she was not at all sure, when the inferno came to Paradise, that she'd be able to rescue herself. She did get out, but lost almost everything, and keeps remembering what it was like to feel so helpless, gripped by such fear and horror.

To make matters worse, not only did the federal government give little early help to the survivors of Paradise, but it compounded

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY SCK_PHOTO

their grief in the weeks afterward. Residents who had been living in RVs, tents, and cars among the ashes of their former houses were evicted, as FEMA ruled from Washington, D.C., that it would stop funding the cleanup, on the logic that if people were living there, it couldn't be an emergency.

"I couldn't bring myself to stay in Paradise, anyway," Joni says, trying to calm her anxious dog, Angel. "When things didn't work out at my sister's, I was camping out in the Cali desert. A friend told me about the Rubber Tramp Rendezvous, and it felt like serendipity."

Few would say that life on the road arrives by good fortune, but for someone like Joni, it offers something important–choice. Forced to start over, needing to make a new set of life decisions, Joni reevaluated things she'd always been told she should want.

"Consumerism as a way of life–as a way of entertaining ourselves–is something I've been very uncomfortable with for a long time," she says. "On top of that, one of the factors keeping me mobile is that I don't want to ever have to uproot and leave again if things get nuts. I'm not escaping civilization per se, but I can't trust a place will be there anymore."

Joni adds, "The idea of being fluid, being able to move with the climate and the weather, is now the most important thing to me. And I want to see places before I'm gone and before they're gone. I want to be dwelling on the positive rather than the negative grind of keeping a roof over my head. The fire crystalized the challenge of our time."

After a pause, Joni shares a final thought:

"I've always looked rather askance at the American Dream–I saw it as a trap. Even though I tried to get there, I knew it wasn't something that was terribly attainable for me. I was around the edges of its trappings. And now I know that isn't anywhere at all."

■■■

THE term "American Dream" was coined in 1931, by the author of a book called *The Epic of America*–ironic timing, since the Great Depression was starting to destroy this dream for so many. But the idea behind the term is one as old as the founding of America itself–this seductive notion that there is equality of opportunity for all in this country, and that those who pull themselves up by the bootstraps can make anything of their lives.

What's not mentioned is what underpins the Dream–a toxic culture of competition. As I watched the future American president repeating phrases about winning over and over during his election campaign–*We're going to win. We're going to win so much. We're going to win at trade, we're going to win at the border. We're going to win so much, you're going to be so sick and tired of winning*–I sensed this was something unique, this relentless focus on winning, and uniquely destructive, to the country that was my new home.

The chasms that exist in America–between the races, genders, rich and poor, urban and rural–are broadened by a culture that is obsessed with competition. The great disturbance in American society rests on this fault line between winners and losers–a divide that's becoming increasingly pronounced.

The World Values Survey, a global research project studying the beliefs of people in different countries, shows that Americans esteem competition like no other industrialized nation on Earth. Americans believe more strongly in the fairness of unequal outcomes. Author and social commentator Fran Lebowitz says there's an idea running throughout American society: "All people who succeed, succeed on their own, and all people who fail, fail on their own."

This viewpoint has become a shared fiction on an epic scale. The values anchoring it are as engrained as a verse from the Good Book–a verse anyone can preach, because everyone knows it. But competition, and the importance of winning, create more than just a belief system. These intertwining strands form the double helix of modern America's DNA.

Historian Scott Sandage views this American way of life as a "eulogy to capitalist identity." The conviction that there must be winners and losers dates back to the nineteenth century, when entrepreneurial spirit and the ideal of the self-made man spawned a society dominated to a great extent by the values of business and finance. These values have just grown, gotten more inveterate, more layered, leading to society today, where the discourse of finance is everywhere, and we're judged as people by our credit ratings. Sandage calls this a situation where "the language of business [is] applied to the soul."

Americans are unhappily locked into a culture of inequality–yet are optimistic about their personal chances of climbing up the ladder. A scholar once summarized Steinbeck's take on this by saying the writer viewed America as a country of "temporarily embarrassed millionaires." In other words, the average citizen might not be proud of his or her circumstance, but believes that by pursuing the Dream, he or she will eventually access millions, and financial embarrassment will vanish. Steinbeck, who spends much of *Travels With Charley* driving around lost, came to conclude that America itself was lost, its culture off-track—but this was an America simply being true to its animating values.

The hope of equality for all has taken a big hit since Steinbeck's journey. Loserdom is rife in a land where everyone is taught to be a winner. But out in the Sonoran Desert, a community is trying to do things differently. Whether by consciously abandoning the American Dream—or by having slipped into a financial situation where the Dream abandoned the American—we are setting out to define success on our own terms.

* * *

J.J., 43, and Kevin, 47, saw both of J.J.'s parents die shortly after they retired. "I remember a week or so before she passed," Kevin says, "J.J.'s mom was crying, saying it's not fair she didn't get to do those things she had worked her whole life for."

"We thought about what was important to us," J.J. adds. "What do we want to do in this life? We wound up asking why we are working so much, when it's just to buy more stuff." They ended up selling that stuff in Denver, where Kevin worked as a mechanic and J.J. managed apartment buildings, and bought a van they named "Shirley B," after J.J.'s mother.

LOSERDOM IS RIFE IN A LAND WHERE EVERYONE IS TAUGHT TO BE A WINNER. BUT OUT IN THE SONORAN DESERT, A COMMUNITY IS TRYING TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

"The Dream in the generic sense is this spoon-fed idea we all know, but I still think this country is big enough to dream different kinds of dreams and go after them," J.J. says. "People express a lot of fear when they ask us what we are doing. Leaving security is a real fear—but it's a fear that people are feeding themselves."

Like the rest of our campfire gang, J.J. and Kevin have survived to this point on what small financial security they had cobbled together. But most rubber tramps can only live for so long on savings, other money scraps, and disability pensions. Eventually, they'll join the tens of thousands of fellow van dwellers on the itinerant work circuit.

There's now a whole unsung economy dependent on the labor of rubber tramps: the sugar beet harvest in North Dakota, where two weeks of hard work can generate up to $4,000 per person; Amazon's Camper Force warehouses across the South and Midwest that only employ van dwellers; and the myriad RV parks around the country that give free hookups and small living allowances to tramps who look after park administration and maintenance.

At a Rendezvous seminar on working as a rubber tramp, one speaker notes the critical distinction it gave his life, elevating him from homeless to *houseless*. The disadvantages of this kind of work are familiar even to some people who work regular jobs in 2019, depending on their positions—the lack of real job security, long hours, and no health insurance. Despite these challenges, it's hard to find anyone on the road with a bad word to say about the mechanics of the roaming labor market—in part because it is exploitation on their own terms, and that kind of small psychological victory is important.

* * *

FOR all of the false promises folded into the idea of the American Dream, however, running toward the alternative provides nothing greater in terms of assurance.

Jess arrives at our camp one night, her eyes large under the vast desert sky, with a physical beauty often rewarded by the conventional world. A dental nurse in D.C., the 28-year-old, stuck in traffic one day, said "Fuck it," packed her things, and left for the Appalachian Trail. More wanderer than hiker, she later hitched south for the winter.

"I can't go back there if I drink," she says, gesturing over the wash with one of Polly Rose's joints in her hand. "I was rained out of my tent, and this guy took me into his trailer."

Jess has no money, no phone, and her already precarious mental health is being stretched thin by living on her looks. She can't even afford to be a regular rubber tramp, and was taken in by a Scottish reiki master twice her age. Our quiet conversations about how to help Jess degenerate with the booze and the desert air. She disappears in a fury.

I can't shake the feeling that Jess had wanted to join me on the road, if only because I could offer a degree of safety as a woman of similar age, and would ask for nothing in return. I'll end up spending my last Rendezvous day searching for her, while feeling troubled by the thought that I might not to be able to handle the responsibility of sharing the road with her, and might not be able to trust her. Adding to my fret is the recognition that I was in this desert to celebrate failure at playing the conventional American Dream game, yet here I was falling into the trap of judging this failure in Jess.

* * *

IF Jess is unlike most of the Rendezvous millennials here mainly to party, she is no less representative of America's young people. This event skews to plus-65 boomers, but there is a growing number of millennials—those born between 1981 and 1997—who have taken to the road.

So-called "losers" are not only getting younger, but their beliefs are moving further away from core national ideals. It's little wonder that in a 2015 survey by Harvard's Institute of Politics, half of millennials said that the American Dream is dead.

Millennials represent the first generation to be poorer than the one that came before them. The rise in freelancing means lower job security across the board, and reduced access to health care. Those with more stable prospects are still suffering from skyrocketing student-loan debt and housing costs. Add to this the fact that millennials have to worry about the damage of climate change looming in their lifetimes.

Content to "fail" by conventional measures in order to "succeed" on our own terms, millennials are redrawing the definition of a good life. That's easy enough for someone like me, whose race and background give me an advantage in terms of cultural acceptance.

PHOTO: ARADOSLAW LECYK / SHUTTERSTOCK

Itasca
Spirit

But there are a lot of people living in a situation contained by America's geographic borders who might as well exist in some kind of nightmare alternate dimension.

Poverty and homelessness are affecting minorities in greater numbers, yet the Rubber Tramp Rendezvous is decidedly white. Julia, the freelance social worker who'd become something of a spiritual guide to our group, is mixed race, but says she's "white-passing enough" to live on the road. With that said, she adds, "I wouldn't let my sons do it, though."

Despite the predominantly white rubber tramp culture, one of its rising YouTube stars is the African-American Ms. J. Ms. J left her job in marketing in Los Angeles three years ago, and now spends her days being paid to drive RVs to dealerships across the country.

"I'm one of those people who doesn't conform to the norm," Ms. J tells me. "I tend to try to break down barriers, and not all black people think that way. I think a lot of people know the historical risk of violence from being with white people—those things are still in the minds of people who lived it, or passed that history down to the next generation."

Not long after Ms. J discussed breaking down barriers and encouraging Americans of different races and ethnicities to embrace life on the road, six California police officers shot 20-year-old African-American Willie McCoy to death in a Taco Bell drive-thru. An employee had seen him slumped over in his car and called the cops. McCoy had fallen asleep.

■■■

THE Great Recession might have ended for Wall Street, but it has barely slowed for Main Street. Homelessness in America has grown exponentially since President Reagan halved the federal budget for housing in the 1980s, and the economic tsunami of 2008 and its aftereffects only accelerated the crisis in affordable housing.

Just as the Great Depression led to people taking to the rails to hop freights, the Great Recession saw people moving into their cars. Unfortunately, the law also moved with them.

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty has monitored 187 of the largest cities, and seen an alarming increase in the criminalization of houseless living. Some 39 percent of cities now prohibit residing in vehicles—an increase of 143 percent since 2006.

"Ninety percent of the nation's housing is affordable to ten percent of population," says Tristia Bauman, senior attorney at the NLCHP. "The majority of the country is just one emergency away from a slide into homelessness."

Bauman recently won a major victory, overturning laws in San Diego that made it illegal to live in cars, in a case she hopes will set a precedent for other cities.

"Laws criminalizing living in cars and RVs," she tells me, "are usually passed as a reaction to visible homelessness and poverty. These laws disproportionately target the most vulnerable in society, such as the disabled, people of color, and immigrants with families—because, quite simply, they are most likely to find themselves on the streets."

Cracking down on the homeless usually begins as local community pressure. A home is seen to embody the values of hard work and self-sufficiency, while homelessness is a billboard for failure. But when so many people in homes have it little better than us on the road, when the middle class is evaporating and the working class has become the working poor, I wonder how much of this community pressure is driven by resentment of our perceived freedom.

That, of course, is little comfort to our brothers and sisters who can't afford the gasoline, or won't risk the road to go to Quartzsite.

PHOTO BY ELLE HARDY

PHOTO: LEONORI / SHUTTERSTOCK

As those of us sitting around the campfire raise glasses to our freedom, rubber tramps are being pushed further and further into the margins.

■■■

IN ways Henry Ford couldn't have imagined, the car remains fundamental to the American way of life. This gathering in the desert makes it clear that becoming a rubber tramp means more than piecing together a living. It's a tiny act of defiance against the stagnation of economic life for those participating in the mainstream home-and-job existence.

Drifting in the trampers' undercurrent, I travelled some 22,000 road miles in ten months. During this long period of sleeping in Walmart parking lots, grabbing stealth "showers" in gas station bathroom sinks, and exploring backwater towns, I had been slowly losing my attachment to the comforts I thought were necessary to a good life. And even here in Quartzsite, surrounded by a ring of jagged mountains, my eye remains trained on the horizon. To know there is always somewhere else to go is a hell of a tonic.

For waifs and strays, taking to the road is an instinctive reaction to everything that is lacking in one's life, including opportunities for social mobility, as well as to the rigidity of a normal working existence, and the stifling anxiety of never quite being able to make ends meet. When everything is fucked, you might as well bet it all on Jack Kerouac, throw caution (and comfort) to the wind, and become a part of the mythos of the road.

■■■

ON the last night of Rubber Tramp Rendezvous 2019, we try to enhance that mythos, gathering at a central bonfire where we ritually ignite a small cardboard van, an RTR tradition, and sing our theme song to the tune of Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again."

The crackle, flames, and music couldn't soothe my troubled mood, as Jess was still on my mind, so I did a final round of searching for her. Our campfire group outside Polly Rose's trailer appears to have been the last people to have seen her. Someone did suggest, though, that she was hitching west to Slab City, a California anarcho-encampment on an abandoned Navy base.

Back at our own campfire, what's left of the group convinces Polly Rose to stay on with them for her sanity—and theirs. J.J. and Kevin are preparing to cross the border to Mexico for affordable dental work, as other trampers have done. Hollywood seems ready to resume his days of digging for gems, and his nights posting on Facebook about being lonely.

Just before I roll out the next morning, we get word from Joni, who left days earlier. Her disaster check from FEMA arrived at her brother's place, and she is about to use the money to buy a secondhand RV. A few weeks later she calls me, ready to begin her new life on the road, with only the hot springs of New Mexico in her sights, and music by Janis Joplin in her head.

"I have the freedom she sang about now," Joni says during a phone connection that can't quite keep up with our conversation. She's referencing a song from 1970, "Me and Bobby McGee," where Joplin sings, *"Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose./ Nothin' don't mean nothin', hon, if it ain't free, no no."* And Joni, former resident of Paradise, California, adds, "I'm not going to say that I'm grateful. But I'll take it."

Elle Hardy is a writer wandering the United States. She hails from Australia and has reported from countries like North Korea and Turkmenistan, but lately America has her affection and attention.

EMILY

BREAKOUT starlet Emily Willis has caught our eyes and hearts, which is why we anointed her our May Penthouse Pet of the Month. Emily grew up in a strict religious family, but as a young woman she broke free of her confines and morphed into the sexually liberated maverick you see here now. Amen.

PHOTOGRAPHY
GERALD DE BEHR

SEE MORE OF EMILY AT PENTHOUSE.COM

TEAR HERE

EXPAND TO SEE MORE
CLICK HERE
worldmags

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HERE

ADDIE ANDREWS

Our June Penthouse Pet of the Month, Addie Andrews, has lived a full life. Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, Addie left the rich greenery and rainy days behind when she was just 17 and split for Utah. She joined the Mormon Church and worked as a missionary for almost a decade until she decided to pivot and get her real estate license. Even though she always dreamed of acting, Addie sold domestic bliss until a lightbulb went off in her head and told her to drop the pantsuit to pursue her lifelong dream of the limelight. Now, here we are. It's a wiggly world, isn't it, Addie?

PHOTOGRAPHY
GERALD DE BEHR

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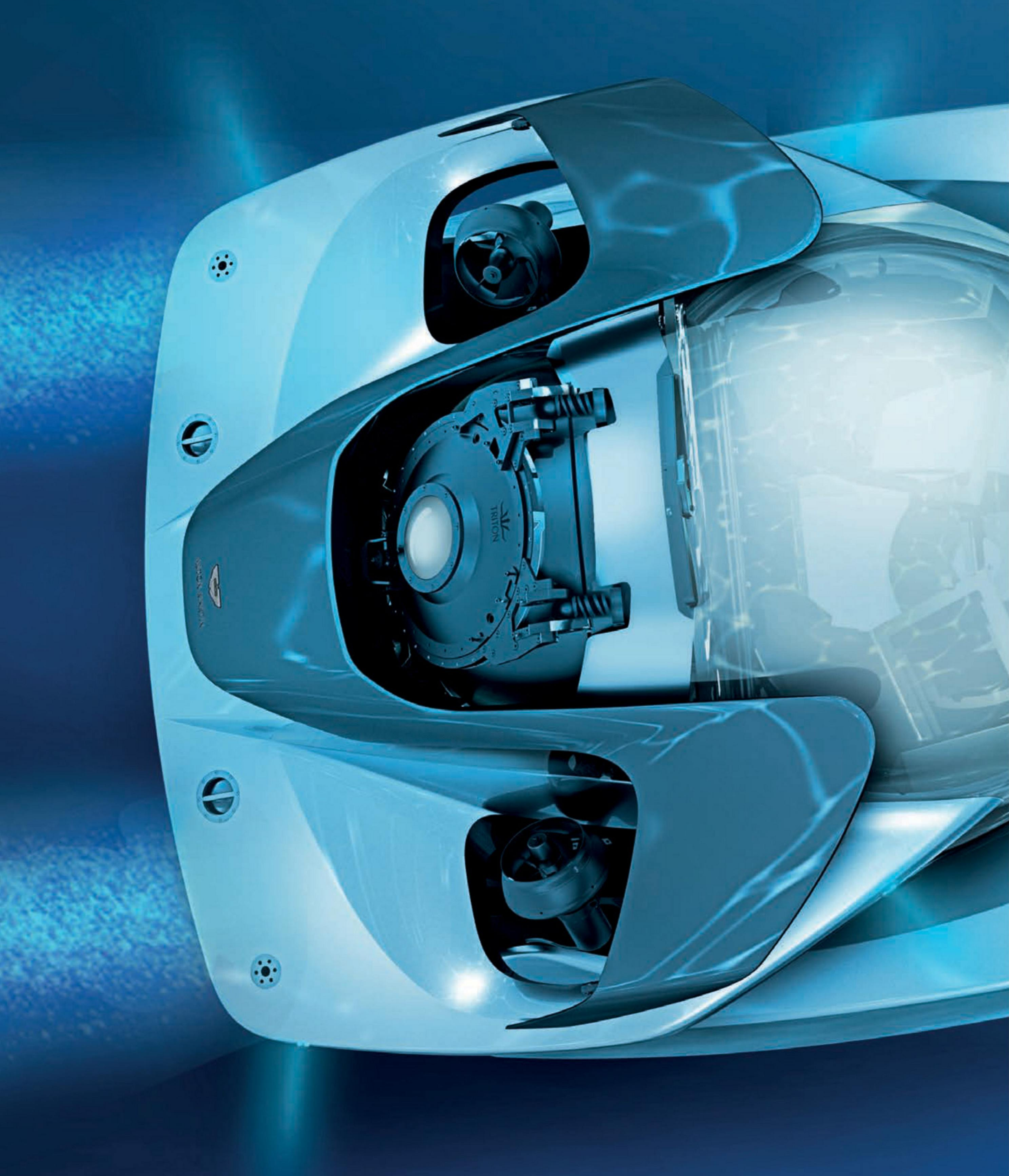

TRITON

DREAM TOY

ASTON MARTIN SUB

IN partnership with Floridian submersibles outfit Triton, Aston Martin has decided to expand its range with an underwater vehicle that's worthy of the company's double-winged badge, famously favored by James Bond. (Although Roger Moore's Bond technically already had a sub in 1977's *The Spy Who Loved Me,* it was a heavily modified and highly impossible Lotus Esprit.)

This, however, takes its cues from Aston's current supercar named the Valkyrie, and features the sharp angles and soft lines distinguishing all their vehicles. While it won't come cheap, the fact that they're collaborating with a manufacturer already known for kick-ass personal subs makes this a lot more than just a concept.

If you're a shark, expect to see rich motherfuckers zooming past you very soon.

FAST FACTS

NAME: PROJECT NEPTUNE
COST: ESTIMATED BETWEEN $4 AND $8 MILLION
CAPACITY: THREE PEOPLE
CAN ANYBODY DRIVE? YES. IT COMES WITH A FOUR-WEEK TRAINING COURSE
DEPTH: MORE THAN A HALF-MILE BELOW SEA LEVEL
SOUND SYSTEM: BANG & OLUFSEN
TRIM: IT'S AN ASTON MARTIN, SO EXPECT PLENTY OF LEATHER AND PIANO-BLACK FINISHES

DREAM GETAWAY

MIGALOO PRIVATE SUBMERSIBLE YACHT

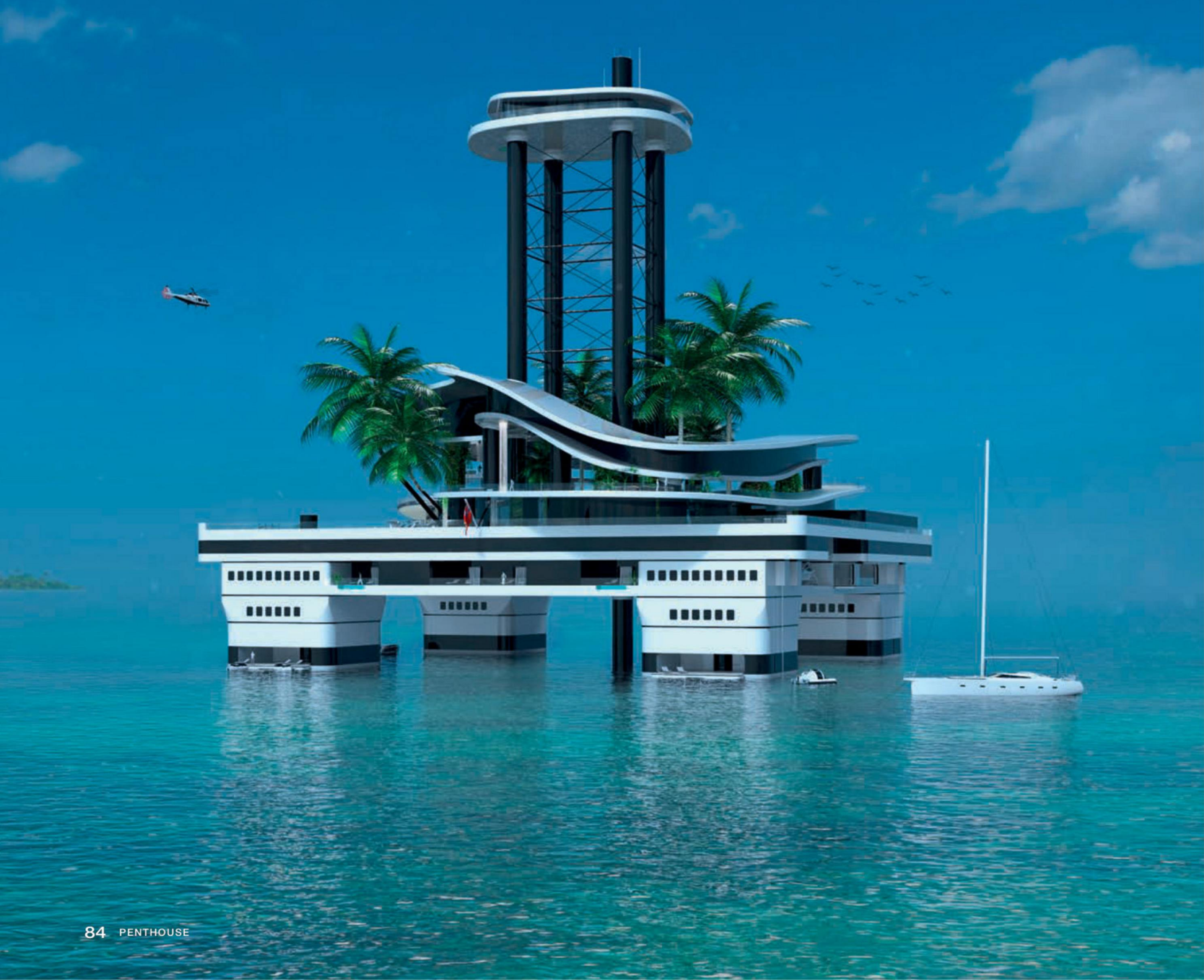
WHILE some designers live in reality, others, like the CEO of Austrian marine-design dreamers Migaloo, focus on the future and dream big. Very big. And why the fuck not?

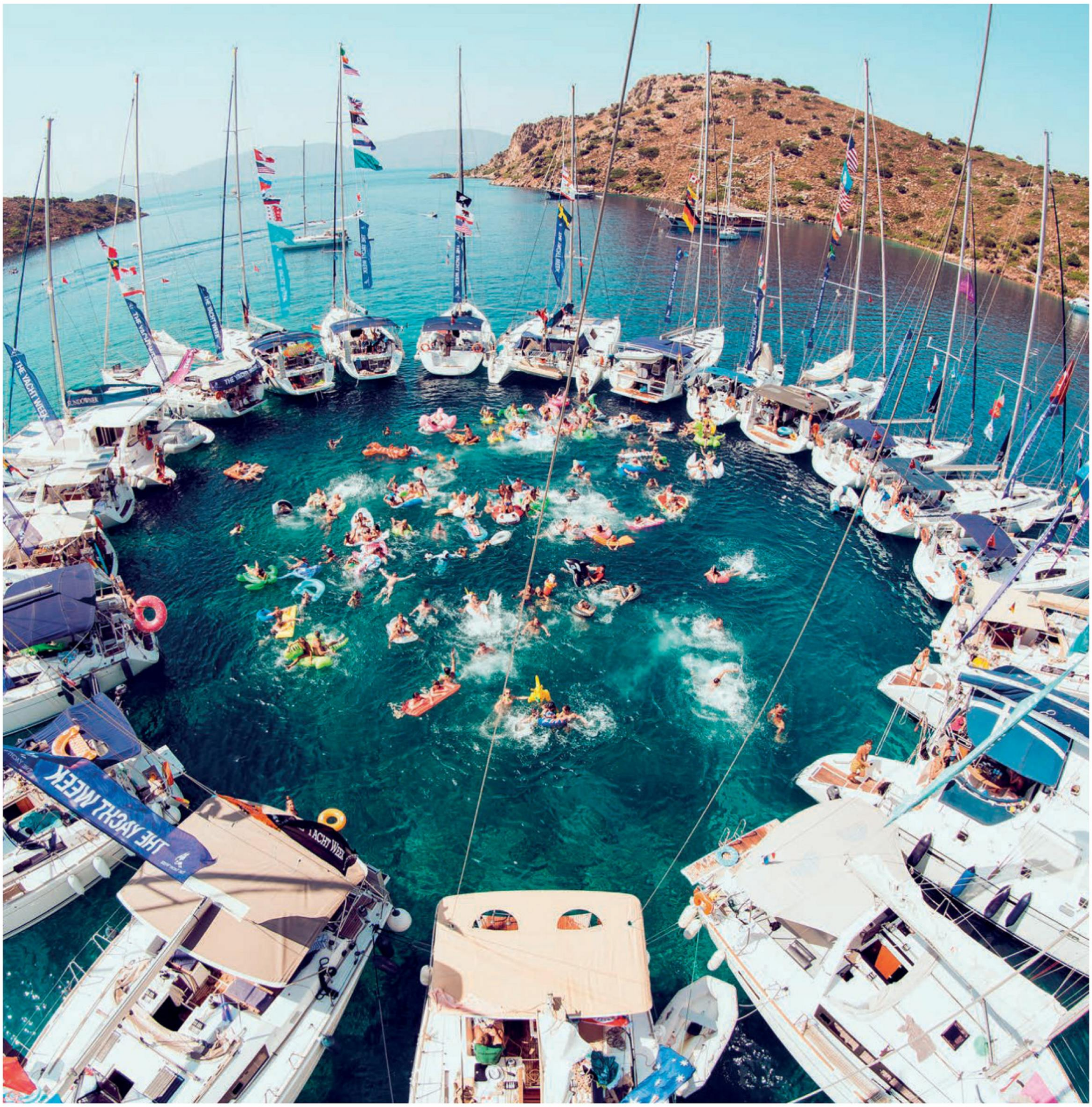
Starting with the M2, a 240-foot-long sub that has bar and restaurant facilities for up to 36 guests, anyone willing to fork out the cool billion-plus for one of these can choose from a variety of options and layouts. There's also the 440-foot M5 for up to 65 guests, the 525-foot M6 for added luxury, or, the big kahuna, the nearly 38,000-square-foot, 930-foot-long M7.

Oh, and the company is also putting out feelers to see if anyone wants a private, custom-built floating island. Their Kokomo island concept (pictured) features a private owner's penthouse raised 260 feet above sea level, a jungle deck with vertical gardens and palm trees, a shark-feeding station (yeah!), and an outdoor movie theater.

Named after the famous white whale that visits the east coast of Australia every season, Migaloo has detailed everything one could imagine in their designs, and it looks like they mean business.

Now, who has a spare couple billion?





DREAM EVENT

THE YACHT WEEK

EVER lusted for the ocean spray on your face as you glide across the Aegean on a fully-equipped sailboat, but don't have a million bucks handy for your own vessel? Same here. Luckily, the good people at The Yacht Week make this a reality for schmucks like us every year.

With beers, beaches, and babes aplenty, The Yacht Week is your ticket to seven days on your own luxury sailboat, which cuts a path through some of the most visually kick-ass routes Europe has to offer (Greece, Croatia, Italy, and Montenegro are the current options).

Excursions are held during the summer months, and you can book an entire yacht for up to 12 people, or a two-person cabin on a shared boat. You can also choose how much you want to shell out, with economy to premium options available, depending on how crazy you want to get.

Each yacht comes with its own skipper, and dozens of yachts make this excursion together, so you'll meet plenty of like-minded folks–and ladies. The yachts make stops along the way so you can stock up on whatever you might need and/or party at the local nightclubs, and then there's the "raft," which is when up to 50 boats are tied together in a giant circle (see photo) and everybody jumps in and swims in the middle.

Between $2,100 and $15,000

theyachtweek.com

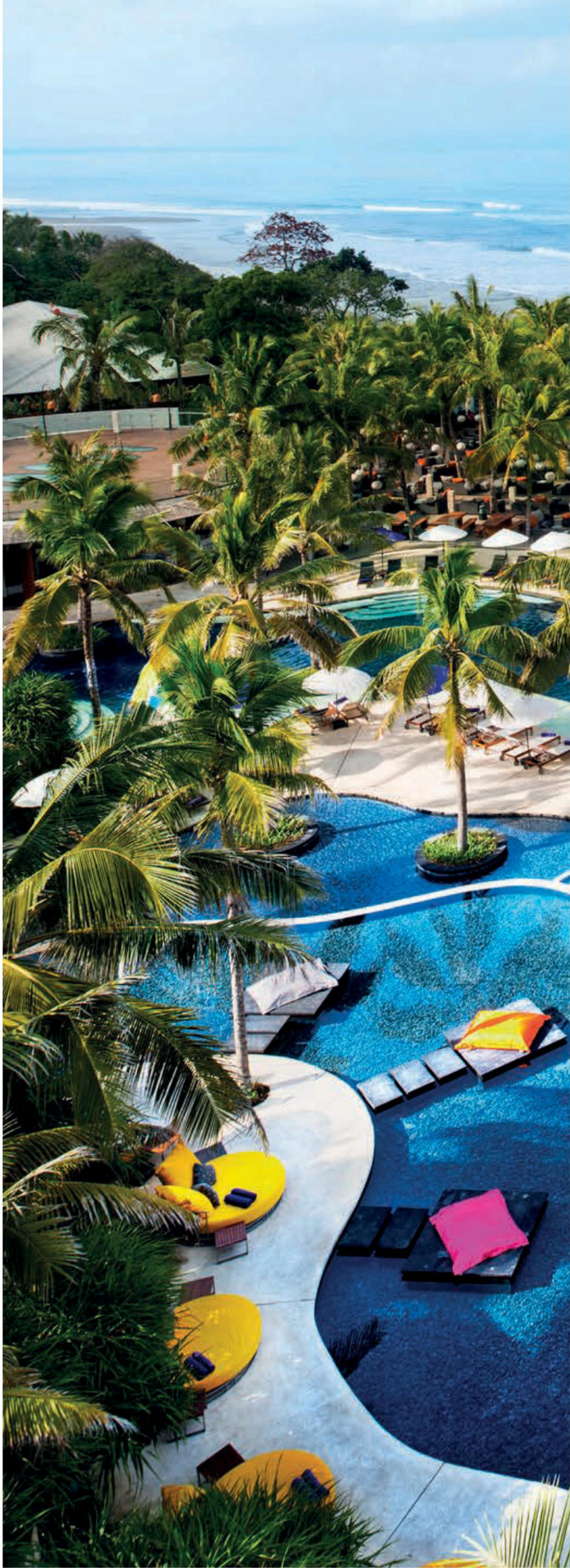
W RETREAT SEMINYAK

AN escape to Bali is a bucket-list getaway for people all over the world (there's more than a few reasons it's known as the "Island of the Gods"). This gorgeous Indonesian island is a dream for surfers and beachgoers, and offers an endless supply of temples, waterfalls, museums, and marketplaces. It's also got some of the most luxurious resorts you'll ever find.

W Hotels are Marriott's luxury brand, geared toward a younger age group, and are a hell of a lot of fun (the "W" literally stands for "Whatever, Whenever," a motto that's part of the staff DNA–they're always on hand to make sure you're never without a cocktail or spa treatment.) And in Seminyak, on the west coast of Bali, the W is a good place to consider if you want to escape the masses on other parts of the island.

Prices start around $260 per night.

marriott.com



EXCLUSIVE ESCAPES

AYANA RESORT & SPA, BALI

Stepping into the Ayana Resort is kind of like dying and going to heaven, with its 222 acres of tropical gardens overlooking the stunning Jimbaran Bay. Ayana is known for its incredible sunsets, but we'll take the 98-foot oceanfront pool, 19 restaurants, cliff-top spa, and 1960s-themed beach club, too. It's only a few miles from a beachfront stretch of local restaurants and shops, if for some insane reason you decide to leave the resort. *Rooms start around $250 per night.*

ayana.com

HERMITAGE BAY

PRINCEVILLE RESORT

IMANTA PUNTA DE MITA

HERMITAGE BAY, ANTIGUA

This five-star all-inclusive boutique hotel is as close to paradise as you're likely to get on this planet. The secluded beachfront property comprises 16 acres of tropical gardens and offers private suites and cottages with sea or garden views. Gorge yourself on regional dishes made with organic produce at the beachside restaurant, then hit the poolside bar and open-air lounge for a breather afterward.
Prices start around $1,300 per night.
hermitagebay.com

PRINCEVILLE RESORT, KAUAI

Previously the St. Regis, this newly remodeled, privately owned resort is located on the North Shore of the island of Kauai (made famous in the 1976 film *King Kong*), with world-class amenities, an 18-hole golf course, and jaw-dropping views of nearby mountains and Hanalei Bay. The resort also has multiple restaurants, a spa, and an infinity pool that's been dubbed one of "the world's most beautiful" by *U.S. News and World Report*. Enough said.
Rooms start around $475 per night.
princevilleresorthawaii.com

IMANTA PUNTA DE MITA, MEXICO

Located just 27 miles from the Puerto Vallarta airport yet secluded on a 250-acre ecological preserve, the 12-suite Imanta Resort on Mexico's west coast is a special place, to say the very least. The oceanfront property sits at the edge of the jungle, is both eco-friendly and architecturally stunning (*Forbes* describes it as a "prehistoric temple paradise"), and has two fine-dining restaurants serving local cuisine that attract guests from surrounding resorts.
Suites start around $800 per night.
imantaresorts.com

CREDIT: KARANDAEV

DREAM BEVERAGES

EASY SUMMER COCKTAILS

NOT everyone will be lucky enough to afford such exclusive tropical getaways (ahem), so for those of us left sitting in our backyards, reading *Penthouse,* let's get our drink on. (Note: Just because you're left at home doesn't mean you're a loser. So, stock your liquor cabinet with good booze. The cocktails are better, and your head will thank you in the morning.)

1. FRESH LIME MARGARITA

Margaritas are delicious. That's all we need to say. So, make it easy on yourself and any guests you might have over and mix a whole goddamn pitcher.

INGREDIENTS:
1 1/2 cups decent tequila, like Casamigos, Don Julio, or Patrón
3/4 cup triple sec
3/4 cup fresh lime juice
4 tablespoons sugar
8 cups crushed ice
2 tablespoons kosher salt
6 lime wedges

Combine tequila, triple sec, lime juice, and 2 tablespoons of sugar in large pitcher; stir to dissolve sugar. Add crushed ice. Mix salt and remaining 2 tablespoons of sugar in shallow bowl. Moisten rim of 6 margarita glasses with lime wedge. Holding each glass upside down, dip rim into sugar-salt mixture. Pour margarita into glasses. Garnish with lime wedges.

2. GIN FIZZ

The classic gin fizz has an egg white in it, but who wants to bother with that? Here's a simple version of this New Orleans specialty that's just as tasty, and refreshing AF.

INGREDIENTS:
1 ounce fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon sugar, preferably superfine
2 ounces London Dry-style gin, like Beefeater, Bombay Sapphire, or Tanqueray
Club soda, to top
Lemon wedge, for garnish

Fill a cocktail shaker with ice and add lemon juice, sugar, and gin. Shake like crazy and strain into a highball glass. Top with club soda and garnish with a wedge of lemon.

3. CLASSIC MOJITO

This traditional Cuban cocktail is super easy, and one of our favorite summer libations. Fizzy, sweet, and tart, this drink tends to go down a little *too* easy, so be warned.

INGREDIENTS:
8 mint leaves, plus 1 mint sprig for garnish
Ice
2 ounces white rum, like Bacardi Silver, Cruzan Light, or Mount Gay Silver
3/4 ounce fresh lime juice
1 ounce simple syrup
1/2 ounce chilled club soda

In a cocktail shaker, muddle the mint leaves. Add ice and the rum, lime juice, and simple syrup and shake well. Strain into an ice-filled Collins glass, stir in the club soda, and garnish with the mint sprig.

4. VODKA GIMLET

The original gimlet was made with gin and Rose's lime juice, but we like the vodka version better, and fresh lime juice makes all the difference. It's super easy and way delicious.

INGREDIENTS:
1 1/2 oz. vodka, like Grey Goose, Ketel One, or Tito's
1 oz. fresh lime juice
1 oz. simple syrup
Ice cubes
Lime wedge, for serving

Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add the vodka, lime juice, and simple syrup. Shake rapidly for about 20 seconds. Strain into a rocks glass filled with ice. Add a lime wedge for garnish.

MUST-HAVES FOR YOUR SUMMER SOIREE

1.

2.

1. WEBER JUMBO JOE GRILL

An outdoor charcoal grill is a necessity (duh), and Weber makes the best ones around. Built to last, they're also perfect for smoking meats.
weber.com $70

2. MARGARITAVILLE BAHAMAS FROZEN CONCOCTION MAKER

Wasting away with Jimmy Buffet just got easier with this frozen-drink maker. It's easy as hell to use—just push a drunken finger on a lever and enjoy a "party batch" of margaritas, daiquiris, piña coladas, or smoothies.
margaritaville.com $250

3. KEG KING KEG MASTER

What's better than tapping your own keg for a party on the beach (or your patio)? Keg Master makes setting up your own beer line a cinch, so you can spend less time fetching your guests bottles from the cooler.
northernbrewer.com $750

4. KITCHENAID BLENDER

Strictly for piña coladas (and maybe the occasional margarita), every beach house needs a blender on hand for frozen cocktails at any hour of the day.
kitchenaid.com $130

5. COR TRIPLE SURFBOARD WALL RACK

It doesn't matter if you're Kelly Slater or rookie shark bait, these racks will ensure that you have surfboards at the ready in your beachside cabana.
cosurf.com $56

6. FRED COOL SHOOTER ICE SHOT GLASS TRAY

Fill these silicone ice-mold trays with water, juice, or whatever liquid you like, freeze, and *voilà*—frozen shot glasses. Sez the company: "A great way to add a little nip to your favorite sip!"
genuinefred.com $15

7. LA MER SPF 50 PROTECTING FLUID

If you're going to keep sunblock on hand (and these days, everyone should), you may as well get the best. La Mer's top-quality sunscreen absorbs quickly, smells great, and isn't greasy like other lotions. Well worth the extra cost.
cremedelamer.com $95

3.

KitchenAid

4.

5.

Silicone
-58°F to 446°F
Fred
COOL
SHOOTERS™
the fill and chill shot glass mold

6.

LA MER
the broad spectrum
spf 50 UV
protecting fluid

7.

8

CUISINART PURE INDULGENCE ICE-CREAM MAKER

This best-selling automatic maker of ice cream, frozen yogurt, and sorbet will ensure happy party guests this summer. It cranks out two quarts of frozen dessert in 25 minutes, is easy to use, and comes with a recipe book. A total no-brainer.

cuisinart.com $90

Cuisinart
2Qt Frozen Yogurt-Sorbet
& Ice Cream Maker
OFF
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INTERVIEW

THE GREATEST OF ALL TIME

IN FEBRUARY, **GEORGES ST-PIERRE** ANNOUNCED HIS UFC RETIREMENT AFTER AN ASTONISHING CAREER. HE'S BEEN CALLED THE BEST FIGHTER TO EVER ENTER THE OCTAGON. *PENTHOUSE* SPOKE TO THE CANADIAN LEGEND BEFORE HE STEPPED AWAY.

INTERVIEW BY SEAN BRUCE

GEORGES St-Pierre is known as the G.O.A.T.

For those unfamiliar with this bit of web parlance, it stands for the "Greatest of All Time." It's a huge claim to make about a fighter, and St-Pierre (also called "GSP" or "Rush") isn't the kind of guy who would make it. There's no Conor McGregor-esque showboating with GSP. He has no need to lord his incredible record over you: the 2,204 consecutive days defending his title; the plethora of fighting publications ranking him as the greatest welterweight fighter of all time; the rare ability to not only fight across divisions but to be the best. He's earned the right to call himself a bad motherfucker, but during our interview, he was genial, polite, even friendly. Maybe it was because GSP, now 38, was older than most champs. Or maybe it was his Kyokushin karate training, a martial arts discipline that emphasizes humility and self-control. Or perhaps years of cage fighting in the UFC taught him that, when you get down to brass tacks, hubris gets you nowhere.

In November 2017, the Québec native returned to the octagon after a four-year hiatus, moving up a weight class and choking out Michael Bisping to claim the middleweight title. The fight, held at Madison Square Garden, was Canada's most-watched pay-per-view event ever, and had UFC commentators saying it looked like GSP had only been gone four months, instead of years. His decision to leave fighting in 2013 was made partly because he needed a break, psychologically, from the sport he loved, and partly due to dissatisfaction with the ways the UFC was dealing with drug cheats. During his time off, St-Pierre indulged his other passion, paleontology. Yes, the guy famous for beating grown men to a bloody pulp in fight after championship fight is a huge dinosaur nerd.

It's this multifaceted nature—his fierce combativeness in the ring, his geniality in person, his enduring dedication to such a physical sport, and his geeky love of paleontology—that made him so intriguing an elite figure in the UFC. Was St-Pierre the greatest fighter of all time? It's a matter for debate. But without a doubt, GSP was one of the most interesting.

We sat down with St-Pierre to talk about what motivates him, what secrets he discovered that kept him on top for so long, why he retired for the first time in 2013, and which beautiful woman, attending one of his fights, briefly made him lose his focus.

What was behind your decision to walk away from the UFC in 2013?
I had a lot of personal issues. The pressure of always being in the spotlight and being criticized—it really got to my head to the point it was driving me a little bit crazy. I was developing anxiety and so, for my own health—for my mental health—I needed to leave. Also, I had problems with the UFC and their drug-testing policy. I knew a lot of people were cheating. It had been bothering me for a long time. I was carrying this with me for a long time, fighting and trying to perform and it was starting to affect my performance.

What inspired you to get back in the ring?
When I left, I never said I was retired, because I thought I wanted to come back if changes were made. Now, with the USADA [U.S. Anti-Doping Agency], the sport is cleaner. Also, I wanted to come back to do something special, to do something unique. Something that would be different from what I was doing in the past.

> “THEY SAID I DIDN’T FINISH FIGHTS, THAT I FOUGHT SURGICALLY, THAT I DIDN’T TAKE ENOUGH RISKS AND NEVER WENT UP A WEIGHT CLASS. SO, I WANTED TO SHUT UP THESE THREE CRITICISMS IN ONE FIGHT AND THAT’S WHY I CAME BACK.”

Fighting for the middleweight title interested me. I always received a lot of criticism from the fans. They said I didn’t finish fights, that I fought surgically, that I didn’t take enough risks and never went up a weight class. So, I wanted to shut up these three criticisms in one fight and that’s why I came back. I was very hungry for that fight. I came back and it was a good night for me.

You were only the fourth fighter in UFC history to be a multidivision champion. I get the idea you don’t like to be told you can’t do something.
If someone says you can’t do something, that’s when you need to do it. It’s a rare achievement, so that’s why I wanted to do it. I did it for myself. A lot of people do it for other people, but I wanted to do it for myself, for my own legacy, to be able to know that I did it.

Being a champ and having a belt—what does that mean to you?
The belt, the name...it’s more of a symbol. To be honest with you, the more experienced I became, I realized there is no strongest man in the world. This doesn’t exist. When you have a belt, most people, for them, it means, “Oh, I’m the most bad-ass man in the world.” It’s not true. Maybe the baddest man in the world is sitting on his couch eating popcorn, you know what I mean? You’d never know. The more experienced you are, you realize what it means. Winning a belt just means on that night, at that particular moment, you beat that guy. You were better than that guy. It doesn’t mean you’re better than all the other guys. Or it doesn’t mean that the guy you beat that day won’t beat you another day.

So a lot of things changed as I matured. When you’re young, you want to be known as the “baddest man,” and when you get older, you realize [they’re] just symbols. I wanted to do it for myself and to have the belt. It was a great achievement, but for me it doesn’t mean the same thing that it means for a lot of the people.

What do you say to those who argue MMA is too violent?
It’s very dangerous. When people say, “It’s a barbaric sport, I don’t like it, I don’t want to watch it,” they’re right that it’s a barbaric sport. Like boxing is a barbaric sport. Like American football is a barbaric sport. Rugby is a barbaric sport. But you know what, I love it. I did it and I grew up on it. It’s just a different form of entertainment and people have different tastes for different things.

I think everybody secretly loves it. I had a girlfriend that said she hated it, but every time the fight started she’d be glued to the screen.
Dana White once said something I thought was very clever. Say you’re at a football match or a rugby match, in the seats, watching the match, and a fight breaks out in the crowd. Everybody will stop watching the match and start watching the fight in the crowd.

Because it’s part of our nature. It’s part of who we are. I can put anybody in a situation where he will have to fight. It can be my mom, who is the nicest human being, but I can put her in a situation that she would have to fight to defend herself or defend the people that she loves. Everybody can relate to that, that’s why it is so popular.

You were talking about the psychological pressures of fighting. How do you deal with that aspect of the sport?
That’s a very important aspect to fighting, and it applies to every sphere of life—sport, business, when you ask a girl on a date. It could be anything. In my sport, there are skills and there is confidence. Some people have the skills, but they don’t have the confidence. It’s like having money in the bank without spending it.

Other athletes have the confidence but don’t have the skills. It’s like a dream that can never be achieved. That’s what my trainer, John Danaher, would say to me and it was very, very smart: “The key is to have the skills *and* the confidence.” That’s what makes a good athlete. You need both. For example, Michael Jordan. Michael Jordan started acting like a champion before he became a champion. LeBron James, same thing. Tiger Woods in golf, same thing. Every actor—Arnold Schwarzenegger—same thing. They have that kind of confidence. Confidence is sort of a mental game. Confidence is a choice

you can work on.

I wasn't always that confident before a fight, but I could work on it. I had tricks I used to make myself confident, so when I went into the fight, I could pretend that I was confident, even if I wasn't. I became confident using these tricks. And confidence is very important for a fighter, important for a businessman, important for everything you do in life. Because when you do something, you need to have trust that when you do it, you can do it 100 percent, no reservations, and confidence is a big part of that.

Who do you view as the top fighters in those middle divisions?
MMA is a sport in constant evolution. Someone could be good today and in six months, there's going to be another guy who's going to come out of nowhere, do something incredible, and he will be the guy to beat. He will be hyped up as the best-ever, so we never know. Right now, I like Khabib [Nurmagomedov]. He's incredible. He's an amazing fighter. But I'll also go back to something I said earlier. It's not necessarily the best fighter who wins a fight. It's the fighter who fights best the night of the fight.

You've been called "The Greatest of All Time" and you've spoken about your true loves and what excites you—women, dinosaurs, and fighting. So I've got three final questions. First, who's the greatest woman of all time?
Greatest woman of all time? My God, that's a hard question. I'll mention one very beautiful woman, Cindy Crawford. I remember she came to one of my fights and I saw her in the crowd and lost focus for a second. I think she's amazing.

Obviously, now we need to know the greatest dinosaur of all time.
For me, it's the Tyrannosaurus. T. rexes had the best olfactory senses of all the dinosaurs. That means a blind T. rex could still find you. The T. rex didn't need his eyes to hunt. That's something people don't know. The T. rex was an amazing creature.

Sounds terrifying. Last one: Who's the greatest fighter of all time?
That's hard to say. Like I said, it doesn't exist. We can just pile up the achievements of the athlete. And the sport constantly evolves. The fighters of today are better than the fighters of yesterday, and it goes on like this. Someone can be good today, but in ten years there are going to be guys that are better. That's what I believe—that records are meant to be broken.

Sean Bruce is an editor at Penthouse magazine in Australia.

THE GREATEST UFC STATS OF ALL TIME

- UFC Middleweight Championship (one time)
- UFC Welterweight Championship (two times)
- Interim UFC Welterweight Championship (one time)
- Winner of the first UFC Champion versus UFC Champion (UFC 94)
- Fight of the Night (four times) vs. Jon Fitch, Josh Koscheck, Carlos Condit, Johny Hendricks
- Knockout of the Night (one time) versus Matt Hughes
- Submission of the Night (one time) versus Matt Hughes
- Performance of the Night (one time) versus Michael Bisping
- Most wins in UFC title fights (13)
- Third most consecutive title defenses in the UFC history (9)
- Fourth Multidivisional Champion in UFC History
- Most wins in UFC history (20) tied with Michael Bisping
- Most wins by decision in UFC history (12)
- Most takedowns in UFC history (90)
- Most successful title defenses in the UFC welterweight division (9)
- Most consecutive title defenses in the UFC welterweight division (9)
- Canadian Cover Athlete for UFC Undisputed 2009

GABBY BIANCO

Smoke Season's frontwoman Gabby Bianco talks gender, fashion, being a producer, and going solo.

INTERVIEW BY MISH BARBER-WAY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDSEY BYRNES

LOS Angeles-based power duo Smoke Season was gearing up for SXSW, the annual Austin, Texas, music fest, when we caught up with frontwoman Gabby Bianco.

As the 30-year-old musician-producer sits in our makeup chair, she recounts her favorite festival shows—Noise Pop in San Francisco and Echo Park Rising in Los Angeles—and explains the importance of checking the stage mechanics.

"Sound check usually consists of me making sure the pipes in the ceiling or the scaffolding onstage can handle my body," she says. "I will climb or jump off anything. I have a good time onstage, much to my body's dismay."

Since forming their band in 2013, Bianco and multitalented musician Jason Rosen have manifested a strong following with their eccentric blend of indie-electronica. "We're one half Portugal. The Man and one half No Doubt," Bianco explains, shaking her long auburn hair. "We like to play with brightness—colors, textures, and music. We are heavy on the sunshine. We're sunny punk."

In addition to her work in Smoke Season, Bianco recently embarked on a solo project, a six-song EP titled *BIIANCO*. She wrote, produced, and played everything herself, and enlisted Grammy-winning engineer Matt Wiggins (known for his work with pop icon Adele) to add some magic to the final mix. Bianco says she just wanted to make the music she listens to when she's "crying, driving, or having sex," but what resulted is a spectacular collection of chill-wave electronica.

We sat down to talk with the up-and-coming producer about her latest project, and what it means to pose for *Penthouse*.

Why did you decide to go solo with *BIIANCO*?
In the past year or so, I've been writing different types of music which didn't fit with Smoke Season's vibe. I needed another outlet for these songs.

Smoke Season has always worked with different producers, [but] as I started working on my own songs, I realized they were getting more and more diluted as I involved other people. I took a step back and realized I *am* a producer! I make all my synthesizer patches, I know how I want my vocals to sound, and I have the vision for my songs. I just needed to brush up on the technical aspects. So, I spent a few months learning how to compress, engineer, and side-chain myself, and what resulted was my six-song EP I completed practically on my own.

That's an amazing accomplishment.
There aren't a lot of female producers in the electronic genre. I'm hoping they're all out there, like me, just waiting to make a name for themselves. Women bring a different perspective behind the scenes. We have a different voice and story.

How do you interact with your fans?
I will sit in [Smoke Season's] DM's and talk with any fan who asks a question, especially when it comes to making their own music. I went on this retreat a few months ago where a bunch of musicians were teaching Ableton-based [music software] programs. It was amazing. I'm always trying to teach other people and learn from my musician friends. Music is a symbiotic relationship.

Who are some of your muses?
I'm a classically trained pianist, so Tori Amos has always been an inspiration for me. We had similar upbringings. She taught me how to dive into the dark emotions of my songwriting, especially when I was younger and just getting my start. As a producer, I really look up to Moby and the way he plays with sound and percussion. As far as style goes, I love Alexa Chung and Cara Delevingne. Cara plays with femininity and masculinity in such an appealing way. I try to embrace androgyny.

Is androgyny a political statement or a fashion statement?
For a long time, femininity and masculinity existed on a hierarchy, with masculinity on the top. I feel like we're moving toward a more horizontal plane, which means anyone can slide all over the gender scale and no one is any more valued than the other. I try to lead by example. Plus, this is just the style I like.

Did you ever think you would be posing for *Penthouse*?
It means something different to my mother than it does for me, judging by the phone call I got a few days ago when she found out I was doing this. [*Laughs*] She was like, "Do NOT show your pussy!" But things have changed—the times have changed. This has been a really empowering experience. I'm bringing the bush back, whether you see it today or not.

> **"FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY [HAVE] EXISTED ON A HIERARCHY, WITH MASCULINITY ON THE TOP. I FEEL LIKE WE'RE MOVING TOWARD A MORE HORIZONTAL PLANE, WHICH MEANS ANYONE CAN SLIDE ALL OVER THE GENDER SCALE AND NO ONE IS ANY MORE VALUED THAN THE OTHER."**

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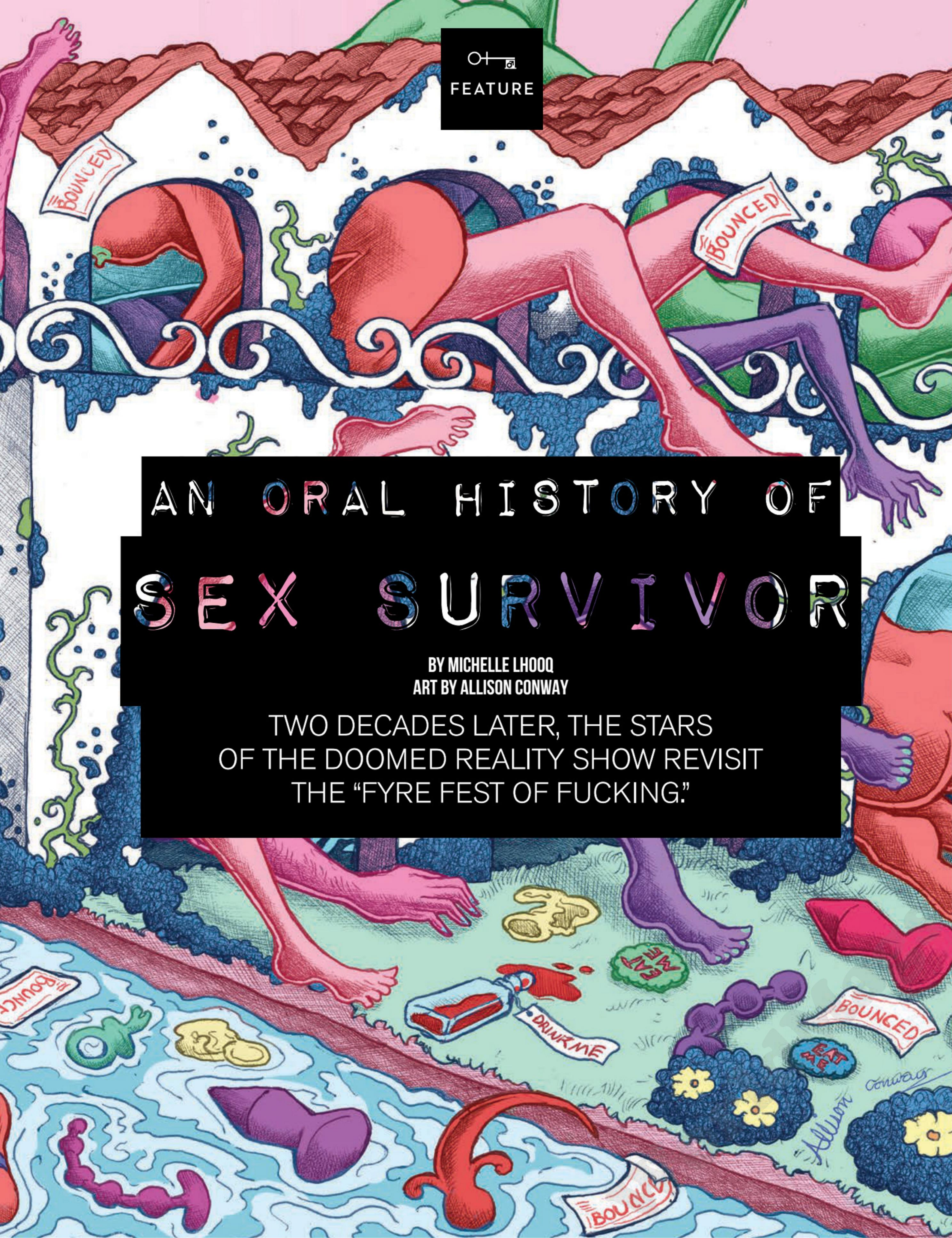
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Allison Conway

AN ORAL HISTORY OF
SEX SURVIVOR

BY MICHELLE LHOOQ
ART BY ALLISON CONWAY

TWO DECADES LATER, THE STARS OF THE DOOMED REALITY SHOW REVISIT THE "FYRE FEST OF FUCKING."

BOUNCED
BOUNCED

S*EX SURVIVOR* sounded too crazy to be true: 30 porn stars in a Hollywood mansion, competing in ridiculous sex contests with names like "Blind Man's Muff" and "Musical Blowjobs" to be the last person lying on their back.

The house was rigged with cameras that live-streamed all the filthy action to an online audience who'd paid $70 for the ability to tune in whenever they wanted, and vote out the actors one by one. The show's tagline: "Screw the most, suck the most, lick the most, to survive."

This was the year 2000, and people were still using Nokia phones and Internet Explorer; the idea of a 24/7 live-stream porn reality show was so outlandish that it instantly became a media phenomenon, covered feverishly in mainstream magazines like *Wired*. At the time, reality TV was just starting to take off with the first season of *Survivor*–and everyone knows that nothing is truly successful until there's a porn knockoff.

Then, just as dramatically as it had come together, it all fell apart. The cameras stopped working, checks started bouncing, and the cast was caught fucking the crew. After the director ran off with the prize money, most of the footage disappeared, too. Although some of it later resurfaced on Playboy TV, it is now almost impossible to watch any scenes from the show.

Nearly two decades after *Sex Survivor*'s catastrophic demise, we tracked down its stars to find out what really went down, both in front of and behind the cameras.

■■■

THE PLAYERS:

- Alana Evans, participant with her boyfriend (now husband), Chris Evans
- Sam Phillips, host
- Steve Nelson, participant and reporter for the website Adult Industry News
- Lianne Young, aka Billie Britt, participant and "porn queen" from England
- Sharon Mitchell, counselor and founder of Adult Industry Medical Health Care Foundation, which provided STD testing to porn stars

Alana Evans: My agent, Robert Lumbard, got a big casting call. They told us that we would be secluded in a house doing mini-contests and having sex with other people in the house. My boyfriend Chris and I went in–they teased us a little and said we looked like brother and sister. We didn't know what we were getting ourselves into. The paycheck sounded incredible.

Sam Phillips: I was the reporter on the Playboy TV series called *Sexcetera,* and my cohost Kira Reed and I did a lot of Skinemax movies and softcore TV. A director-producer named Pat Siciliano hired me and Kira to host *Sex Survivor*. It's funny, because now you can't find an article on it to save your life, but at the time it was all anyone in the industry was talking about. It came out right on the heels of the first-ever *Survivor*.

Lianne Young: It got really good buzz. It was like the first *Big Brother* of sex. And it was in Drew Barrymore's old house! It made CNN, CBS, everything.

Sharon Mitchell: I was running the clinic that does all the testing for porn talent, and I got asked by the company, Metro Distribution, to do all the testing for *Sex Survivor*. We screened for hepatitis, and medicated everyone for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes. And of course, we used a standard early-detection test for HIV.

Alana Evans: Once we'd done our STD tests and such, we were not allowed to have sex with anyone else, because they wanted to keep their performer pool clean, and not worry about contamination of STDs from outside. For a bunch of people going into a house, that's pretty important.

Steve Nelson: [Producer] Michael Caruso was recruiting for *Sex Survivor,* and I was interested in reporting on it for Adult Industry News. Michael said, "You can come in, but you have to come in as talent." So I got tested with everyone else. My ex-wife and I were swingers, so we were used to doing it in front of people, but I wasn't officially "talent" until then. I was able to bring a computer since I was reporting, but I had to leave it in the computer room. No one was allowed cell phones or laptops in the house.

Alana Evans: Michael Caruso was an older gentleman with mostly white hair. He was the one calling the shots, so he was telling us how this was going to go. There were multiple webcams in every room that were supposedly feeding live footage to the website that people were subscribing to. At that point, other than it being live on the internet, we didn't know what the final distribution was going to be. That was not explained to us.

Steve Nelson: Before we went up to the house, we were sequestered in a motel off Hollywood Boulevard. We were all in a room, getting some kind of briefing. One of the girls had to pee really bad, so she grabbed a plastic cup and peed in it. [Performer] Danny Martell ran up, grabbed the cup, and drank her pee. That totally blew my mind. I think he was just into it!

Alana Evans: After the first couple of days in the motel, we were taken up to the house–a massive, beautiful mansion that sat on top of the Hollywood Hills. You could go underneath the patio and see into this big pool from belowground. There were even windows in the pool and a walkway over it. There were also so many people; it felt kind of like a big adult camp.

Lianne Young: Everything was really well-organized and professional. The food was fantastic, and the health adviser was there, giving us tests. So if we needed B-12 shots, we got those.

Alana Evans: There was always craft services in the kitchen. They had a ton of makeup artists, and they would take care of us. It seemed like it was [catering] to all of us. We had no idea of the meltdown that was happening on the other side.

Sam Phillips: They outfitted the house with 31 cameras and every

BOUNCED
DRINK ME
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EAT ME

room had night vision. You could see everything that happened in that house. The viewer would buy a pass for $70, and could just log on whenever. It was basically a 24/7 fuck-a-thon.

Every day we would show up and they would tell us the contests they were planning on filming that day. The idea was they'd have the challenges during the day, but if you really wanted to stay, you had to fuck at night. You'd have to be a fuck machine and fuck as long and as crazy as you could. Because if you were boring, you would be voted out.

Lianne Young: You're working from early morning to late night. When you make a normal movie, the [director] says cut, and you go home and get your check. In *Sex Survivor,* there was no cutoff point. Even when the cameras stopped rolling, the in-house internet cameras were working. The only break or escape time you had was going to the toilet.

> "TWENTY-FOUR OF US IN TOGAS, TRYING TO HAVE SEX WITH AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE. A ROOM FULL OF WHITE SHEETS AND NAKED BODIES—IT WAS LIKE WALKING INTO A COMEDY PORNO."

Sam Phillips: One day, I was wearing a raincoat because there was a squirting contest, and it was so we would not get wet with people's piss. I was just like, "Oooh, everyone's squirting, watch out, guys!" But we weren't wearing raincoats every day. We were looking glamorous—we were hosts.

Lianne Young: The "Roman Orgy" was the messiest contest ever. Twenty-four of us in togas, trying to have sex with as many people as possible. A room full of white sheets and naked bodies—it was like walking into a comedy porno. I had to stop performing because I was laughing too much. Once I started laughing, everyone started laughing.

Alana Evans: We were having so much sex, it was crazy! And not just straight penetration, it was all kinds of things. It was complete nonstop sexual activity. We weren't sleeping full nights because we were always on camera.

Lianne Young: When you're doing a regular porn shoot, it's more intimate. That's what makes a good porno; there's got to be some kind of connection. When you went into the *Sex Survivor* house, you didn't have to have that. You were free to move from one performer to another. There was no direction, and there's no editing when it goes on the internet. You can't do retakes if there's an accident.

Alana Evans: My boyfriend Chris and I were always with each other, and that's kind of how most of the couples did it. We were also only together maybe a year at this point, so it was all really new and intimidating. There's beautiful, naked women all around. This is the testing point for any relationship in the adult industry.

Sharon Mitchell: Group counseling took place in the living room. When you put that many porn stars in a house, there's a lot of drama. The producers were setting up situations and feeding [the performers] alcohol for them to have sexual liaisons.

There was one young man who was very concerning. He was very new, and he just didn't seem ready to do this. I asked producers to have him excused from the show, but they weren't in a hurry to let him out of his contract.

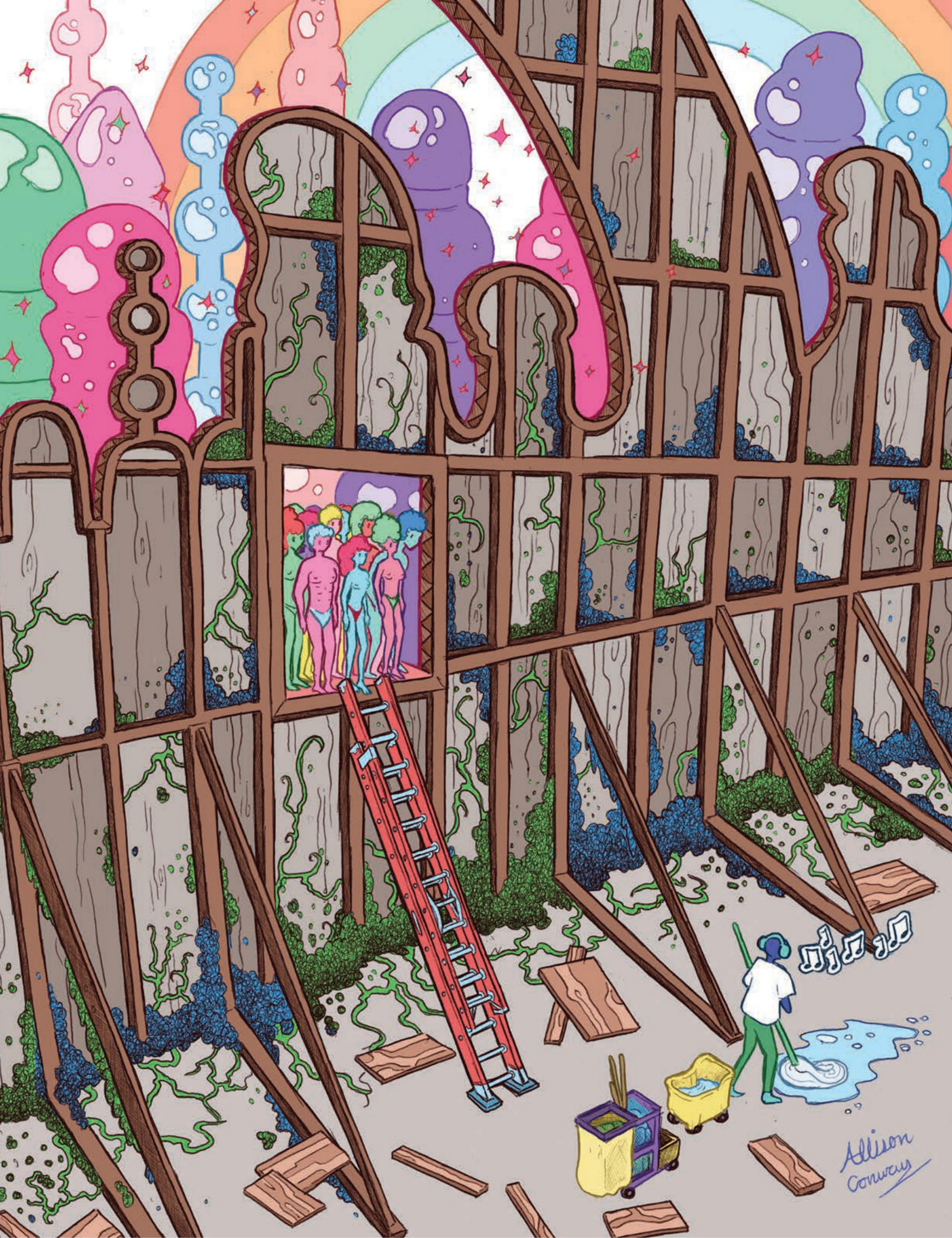
Lianne Young: I became a mother hen to the rookies who didn't live their lives as adult stars. I used to protect them and say, "Do what's right for you, not for the camera."

In my 20-year career, this was one of the worst scenarios because you're trapped in a house, and you're not in control of what you're filming or what the viewers are seeing. You had to be very careful what you were willing to do, and not get carried away, because what you did, you couldn't take back. There were scared 19-year-olds in the house not knowing what the fuck was going on.

Alana Evans: The first contest was called "The Vibe Off." All the women were lying next to the pool on different layers of mattresses and pillows. We were using sex toys and masturbating as a group. I was the only one who said, "You know what? I'm gonna do anal." Porn was different back then. Anal was taboo. And it worked, I won a television! I'm thinking, *I won the first big contest! This is great! Whoop! I'll make it here.* But the morning comes, and I get my name called to be sent home. I was crushed. I didn't understand how I'd won a contest, but now the viewers are sending me home? As a 24-year-old girl, that's a huge hit to your ego. I actually cried. I was really upset, because I had to leave my boyfriend there.

Then I go home and find out that no one had voted. None of the websites are working—they're not streaming, no one's watching anything. Yet they're still making people in the house perform under the premise of being watched. No one chose me to go home, except for the producers. They thought that if they sent me home, it would make my boyfriend go crazy and fuck all the girls in the house. He was six-four, blond, ripped. They were hoping that they were going to get some really hot stuff. It did the exact opposite. It made him go to every webcam with signs telling me that he missed me and he loved me. He made it so he was going to be the next one sent home, because he wasn't giving them what they wanted.

Sam Phillips: Within the first four days, it all started falling apart. The next thing that went down was one girl beat up another girl, and [the producers] threw her out and said, "Well, you went against the contract, so we're not paying you." She started making a big


Allison Conway

deal and people started grumbling like, "Are we gonna get paid?" It became apparent that the executive producer was bouncing checks. We heard that the house was going to be shut down and they were gonna throw us out because a check bounced for the location.

Alana Evans: People were worried about what was going on. Who is this man, Michael Caruso? Who is this company? When [porn star and participant] Teri Weigel and Michael were caught having sex in the confessional booth, that's when all hell broke loose. Michael wasn't a part of any testing pool, and now he'd just had sex with Teri.

Steve Nelson: Teri's a good kid. There's no one with a better heart than Teri. The Teri Weigel scandal was initiated by the producer, Michael. Michael was in the confession booth playing the part of a priest and he was hot for Teri. That polluted the talent pool, because he was going home every night. Really, he did the wrong thing by breaking the rule.

This problem wasn't exclusive to *Sex Survivor*. It happens on all sets because you can't keep porn stars' clothes on! They love sex, and I don't blame them. Today, I hear more that girls are like, "The camera is not rolling, don't touch me." Back in the day, if there was chemistry, there would be nonstop sex.

Alana Evans: Teri was crazy the whole time we were in the house. Teri didn't stop—she was trying to get her hands on everything. But Teri wasn't there by herself; she had her creepy little husband with her. We didn't want to have anything to do with them, because he made us uncomfortable, and Teri was a full-on sex freak. We all like sex, don't get me wrong, but she was just a different kind of animal. So when she was caught having sex with the main producer, that's when everybody was like, "Okay! Nope!"

Chris comes home and fills me in on the complete meltdown. There's nothing real about what's happening in the house now. It's no longer a competition. It's, "We can fuck the boss and stay as long as we choose."

"WE WERE DOING STUFF WE WOULDN'T NORMALLY DO IN OUR PORN CAREERS. WERE PRODUCERS TAKING ADVANTAGE? I'M NOT SURE. BUT PEOPLE WILL DO WHATEVER THEY CAN TO WIN."

Sharon Mitchell: Teri Weigel was the shining star. She wasn't really a porn star—she was a unique gal, very bright and beautiful. She came from *Playboy,* and had never been in an arena like this. She was a swinger, and she was genuinely happy to be in a group of people like this and just have sex with everybody. She was getting a lot more airtime, and there was a lot of jealousy amongst the girls because they felt they should all be featured, not just Teri.

Lianne Young: Teri had to be removed from the house, and her husband at the time did a protest on top of the roof. He was going mental, so he had to be removed as well. He was shouting, "We're not being moved!" It was hilarious.

Sam Phillips: So the contest was no longer live and online. Nobody could see it. Once it went offline, the whole shit hit the fan. The people that were kicked out saw that it wasn't online and told the people that were still inside. So they revolted and threatened to leave. And the executive producer begged them, if they would just stay and do the contest as if it were actually still being voted on, they'd split the pie between the people that remained.

Lianne Young: We had a proper business meeting to go over the legal terms with the camera people, producer, and stand-in director. I remember sitting in that room and thinking that this show is fucked up and we can't trust each other, because obviously that happens when someone breaks the ring of trust. Some people were crying, some were stressed.

The director had been fired. There were about ten people left, and we all said, "Look, we have to work together to save the show. Let's do *this* game, and excuse Teri going out *this* way." Otherwise, millions of dollars were going down the drain. Since we were working together, it was only fair that whoever won, we were gonna split the money equally. We didn't tell the public. What we chose to do with our winnings was up to us.

Sam Phillips: We all felt terrible. But we all continued, because everyone was told that they were all going to get paid. We all just wanted this to work out for everyone. And if I quit and Kira quit, then who would host? In the end, me and Kira got ten grand, and our checks cleared. But I heard a lot of people's checks at the end did not clear. They had different production companies all working on this thing, and I heard a lot of crew people didn't get paid, either.

Lianne Young: I came in second; my check was supposed to be $250,000. I got the original $7,000 [when] I signed to go in for seven days, but as far as I know, nobody ever got the winnings. I dealt with a lawyer after the show, but there was no money to be had. Michael Caruso ran off with the money and moved to Florida or something.

One lesson you've got to learn is, if something sounds so good, it can't always be true. There are a lot of snakes in pornography, and they can wear many disguises. Another lesson is that working in a big group like that can be very hard. It was a mass production, and if you're not experienced you shouldn't go anywhere near it.

Because it was new, everyone was on adrenaline. We were doing stuff we wouldn't normally do in our porn careers. Were the producers taking advantage? I'm not sure. But people are competitive and will do whatever they can to win. I think some of the younger performers could have been easily coerced. In fact, I wouldn't advise anyone to go into porn these days. It's one of the only industries where the wages have gone down, not up.

Sam Phillips: It was a groundbreaking event that ended up, y'know, fucking everyone over. It was like the Fyre Fest. Yeah, that's literally what it was. It was the Fyre Fest of fucking.

Michelle Lhooq is an L.A.-based music and weed journalist, and the author of the new book "Weed: Everything You Want to Know But Are Always Too Stoned to Ask" (Random House/Prestel).

CYBER CUTIE

Jocelynn

THIS month's Cybercutie, Jocelynn A., was born and raised in Sin City, surrounded by casinos, flashing billboards, and recycled air. But this beauty is shockingly Zen for someone who once took the school bus down the Vegas Strip. In Jocelynn's case, Anaïs Nin was right: "In chaos, there is fertility."

PHOTOGRAPHY
BAARIKS GALLERY

Worl

STOCKS & BONDAGE

FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS GO WITHOUT ORGASMS

BY JENNY NORDBAK

THE first summer I came home from college, long before my foray into the world of professional BDSM, I somehow found myself finger-banging my hetero childhood best friend in the guest room of another friend's house.

How did I end up in this strange situation? Over dinner, Carolyn had admitted something so unacceptable to me that I'd simply had to take drastic action.

In a quiet moment between other topics, Carolyn blurted, "I don't think I've ever had an orgasm."

I lowered my fork, glancing up to see how serious she looked. She usually had the coloring of Snow White, with the palest skin and black hair, but her cheeks were flushed with color and initially she wouldn't meet my eyes.

> **IN A QUIET MOMENT BETWEEN OTHER TOPICS, CAROLYN BLURTED, "I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER HAD AN ORGASM."**

"Are you serious?" I asked unnecessarily.

Carolyn knew this wouldn't be a joking matter for me.

She muttered, "I mean…maybe I have?"

I cocked an eyebrow.

"If you aren't sure, then it didn't happen. Honey, how is this possible? And why did you wait so long before telling me?"

She hid her face in her hands, shaking her head.

"It's fine," I said, trying to reassure her. "Let's just fix it."

"Can you draw a diagram and explain it or something?" our other friend asked from across the dining room table.

"Fuck that. I'll just show you. We'll make sure it happens and then you can make up for all the orgasms you've missed out on over the years."

She tried to mumble all the reasons why we couldn't do that, but it was half-hearted. She wouldn't have made her revelation if this wasn't the outcome she was looking for, and we both knew it.

"Do you want me to show you?" I asked directly.

"Yes. Please teach me.…"

I ignored the exclamations from our other friend and said, "Meet me in the guest room. I need to grab something from my car."

I didn't wait to see if she would obey before sprinting out to my car to grab a pair of handcuffs. Why that seemed necessary to me is a mystery, but bondage turned me on even then, so it didn't occur to me that it wouldn't also turn her on.

When I got upstairs, I found her in the guest room, sitting on the bed with her pants off. Her yellow cotton panties were adorned with ice-cream cones.

I grinned at her, excited to see if I could show her what she'd been missing. I'd gotten myself off hundreds of times for a number of years, but could I show someone else how to do it?

I glanced around the room and said, "Get on the floor," identifying the leg of the bed frame as the easiest thing to cuff her to.

Once she was stretched out on the floor, she laughed, but didn't protest when I cuffed her wrists above her head.

I explained, "If your hands aren't free, then you can surrender to the pleasure without feeling like you have to do something with them. If it helps, fantasize you're being held captive or forced or something. Do whatever turns you on. I can blindfold you if you want to pretend I'm a dude, but you won't be able to see what I'm doing."

"I want to see," she said.

"Ready?"

She nodded. "Let's do it." She lowered her head back to the floor.

It didn't occur to me to start with foreplay since I was focused on the mechanics, but I kind of wish I could go back and slowly kiss and lick her soft skin until she was begging me for more. Instead, I gently rubbed her cunt over the thin cotton of her panties, making my way with light strokes closer to her clit until I was circling and pressing on it with each pass back and forth. She thrashed her head on the carpet.

"That spot where it feels aching and intense is your clitoris. That's where you want to focus. You'll have to experiment to figure out what kind of motion and pressure work for you, but that's what will make the magic happen."

I kept rubbing, surprised to find myself turned on, but I thought it was just secondhand arousal from knowing what I was making her feel.

"I can probably manage it over your panties, but it'll be better if you take them off. It doesn't make us lesbians, and it's nothing I haven't seen before."

PHOTO: ALEKSANDR RYBALKO / SHUTTERSTOCK

She didn't even hesitate. "God, yes–take them off! It feels so good," she exclaimed, laughing a little self-consciously at her outburst, but quickly losing herself in the moment again.

I stripped her panties off and eased my way back to her clit, fascinated to see the dark, soft hair between her thighs that she'd never shaved before. I teased her for a few moments, circling her bud with light pressure until she was spreading her thighs and begging for more.

"Fuck!" she cried. "What are you doing to me!?"

I huffed a laugh, taking that as my cue to push her to the brink. I stroked her clit in hard, quick little movements just the way I liked, and her whole body started to jerk and shake with the intensity of what she was feeling. I was glad she was cuffed because I had to press her hips down just to keep her still.

When she finally tumbled over the crest of her very first orgasm, I felt an intense rush of power that I would later come to recognize again when I embraced my dominant tendencies.

Panting, she couldn't stop saying, "Holy shit, holy shit, holy shit!"

I gave her a moment to ride it out, then I began rubbing her clit again. But this time, as she parted her legs and started to thrash, I slid two fingers from my other hand down her slit and between her lips. She was wet with the slick evidence of her arousal, so it was easy to work my fingers into her cunt. I finger-fucked her pussy as I continued to work her clit, delighted to find that she was mindless with pleasure, no longer forming words but moaning incoherently.

This time when she came, I felt her clenching tightly around my fingers, and when I pulled them out, they were soaked.

Just as I uncuffed her, feeling triumphant, someone started pounding on the locked door.

"Girls! You come out of there right now!" demanded our friend's mom. "I will not have you doing *lesbian* things in my house!"

We dissolved into fits of laughter as Carolyn pulled her clothes back on. We hugged, somehow still un-self-conscious about what we'd done. There was no shame in teaching a friend such a critical lesson.

I got in my car to drive home, laughing aloud at what had just happened. I realized my fingers still smelled like Carolyn's pussy, a different scent from my own.

Perhaps I should have been confused by how much it turned me on, but when it comes to my sexuality, I've never experienced much self-doubt. I simply rushed home and got myself off over and over again in my childhood bedroom, smelling the lingering scent of my best friend's pussy on my fingers, and remembering what it felt like when she was rocked by an orgasm for the very first time.

Jenny Nordbak is a retired dominatrix and author of "The Scarlett Letters: My Secret Year of Men in an L.A. Dungeon."

COOL DOWN

Olive

JUNE 2017's Penthouse Pet of the Month Olive Glass is a classic beauty. Imagine if Louise Brooks was reincarnated today and got really into painting, erotica, and having a fabulous time, all the time. Not only is Olive stunning, but this Los Angeles local is an extremely talented artist. Check out her work on Instagram @glassolive

PHOTOGRAPHY
JAMES BANASIAK

PHOTO: GRSI / SHUTTERSTOCK

Book Club Cougars

MY friend Keith’s mom has a book club—a quartet of attractive, forty-something women who drink Chardonnay and cackle loudly about filthy books. They’re over at his house every few weeks. They’ve read everything from the Kama Sutra to a dominatrix memoir to romance novels. Keith finds it uncomfortable. I think it’s hilarious.

We both recently started college. I’m 19, but I haven’t lived a particularly sheltered life. I lost my virginity to my middle-school girlfriend and have gotten lots of action since then. But one thing I had never done—even though MILF porn really turned me on—was sleep with a much older woman.

So you can understand why thinking of four hot moms talking about sex as they got buzzed on wine was a bit distracting. Since Keith’s mom Jill is one of these MILFs, I hadn’t confessed this to him, but I fantasized about the scene a lot. What if I just walked in there naked, offered up my services, and watched what happened?

Well, the other day I was hanging out at Keith’s place when the book club convened. We were listening in from the kitchen as they discussed a sex-filled romance novel. During this eavesdropping, Keith got a phone call. His girlfriend’s car had broken down, and she needed help.

I offered to go with him, but Keith said no. By the furtive way he responded, I figured his girlfriend saying “My car broke down” was code for “Let’s have sex,” so I let it go. He told me to finish our takeout dinner and leave whenever.

I happened to be feeling pretty good about the results of a lot of gym work in recent months, which helped me walk with decent confidence into the living room where the book club was meeting. The women were sprawled all over the couches—tattooed Carol-Ann, curvy Lisette, foul-mouthed Olive, and mind-numbingly hot Jill. One Chardonnay bottle was empty, and another would be soon. When I appeared, they all stopped talking and stared at me.

I casually took a seat on the sofa near Jill, even though it was hard not to feel awkward with them staring at me. “So what are you discussing today?” I asked.

“Oh, you know,” Olive said, winking at me. “Threesomes, foursomes, gang bangs.” The other ladies collapsed into giggles.

“Oh, yeah?” I asked, playing it cool. “Any of you have experience with those things, or is this all hypothetical?”

Carol-Ann traced a finger up Lisette’s thigh. “Actually,” she said, “we were all in the same sorority. So yes, we got freaky a few times.”

This was excellent news. Apparently they’d all slept with each other in college.

“Please, Carol-Ann,” Jill teased. “Don’t traumatize the boy.”

I gave her my best smile and subtly flexed my biceps.

“I’m not a boy anymore, Jill,” I said. Then, in a move so bold I could hardly believe myself, I looked her up and down and licked my lips.

“Jill, I think that young man is offering you something,” Olive said, draining her wine glass and pouring another. The others stared raptly as Jill flushed under my gaze.

“Not just her,” I said, deciding to go all in. “I have no practical experience with group sex, but I’d love to learn.” I winked.

There was a moment of appalled—or intrigued?—silence, and then Olive burst out laughing. “Well, shit,” she said. “I’m in. It’s been a while since I had some nice, young cock.”

“Me, too,” Lisette said, leaning over to squeeze my bicep appreciatively.

Carol-Ann got up and straddled my lap, then started kissing my neck.

Jill had her hands over her face, but she was watching through her fingers. I rocked my dick against Carol-Ann, who moaned, and Jill blushed again before throwing her hands down.

“Not a word of this to Keith,” she stressed, understandably, and moments later she was cuddling and making out with Lisette on the couch next to me.

I got to kiss all of them in the living room. They also all kissed and groped each other. Apparently, sorority girls never forget how to get down, because within a few minutes, Olive was fingering Lisette on the couch while Jill kissed her. I felt like I was in heaven.

Eventually, we took things to the bedroom. Jill was divorced, so there was no husband to worry about—just a king-size bed and a nightstand full of toys. Jill brought out three different vibrators, then pulled restraints out from beneath the mattress. They were black with padded cuffs that attached to both wrists and feet.

To my surprise, the cuffs were apparently intended for me. The ladies escorted me onto the bed, then stripped off all my clothes and tied me up. I asked them to skip the blindfold, because there

> ***Apparently, sorority girls never forget how to get down, because within a few minutes, Olive was fingering Lisette on the couch while Jill kissed her.***

was no way I was going to miss seeing my MILF fantasy come to life.

Then they all got naked. Their bodies were so sexy. I'd never been with a woman who had cellulite and a tummy and all those supposedly "bad" markers of age. These ladies looked womanly, and something about all those curves made me want to fuck them blind. It was like seeing classical fertility goddesses come to life.

Jill crawled over me first. Seeing my friend's mom like this—naked, with her breasts swinging over me and her mouth red from kissing another woman—was beyond hot. My dick was incredibly hard, and it stood straight up off my belly. Jill grabbed it and started pumping, rubbing her crotch on my thigh. I was shocked at how wet she was—she was practically dripping as her pussy ground into me, smearing her moisture over my skin. I lifted my leg as much as the restraints allowed, trying to rub against her.

Olive placed a hand around my throat and held me down. "No moving," she said. "We're going to use you."

"Fuck yes," I said. I'd imagined doing them all one by one, leaving them happy and satisfied, but instead it looked like they were going to do *me* one by one. And yup, I was down for this.

While Jill rode my thigh and Olive gently choked me, Carol-Ann bent over the bed and sucked my dick. She took it deep, bobbing up and down and following the motion with her hand.

Older women were incredible, I decided. I was never going to fuck a young woman again.

Jill was grinding hard, and I was torn between focusing entirely on Carol-Ann's mouth and fixating on Jill's pussy and what it would take for her to come. The final member of the party, Lisette, reached out and squeezed Jill's nipples while she rode me, and it wasn't a gentle pinch—she was punishing those tight little buds. Jill gasped and started spasming on my leg, and as she came, her liquid slid down my thigh.

"Let's get a condom on you," Olive said. She pulled one out of the nightstand drawer and rolled it on expertly. Then she grabbed one of the vibrators, switched it on, and held it against my balls.

I made some sort of garbled noise as the vibrations shook through me. I'd never even considered this as an option, but it was amazing. The four women stood around the bed, looking down at me as I jerked in my restraints, and it felt like I was in some kind of pagan ritual.

But there were three vibrators, and it didn't take long for Olive to thrust one inside Lisette. I watched as she pumped the pink cylinder in and out, then pressed it against Lisette's clit. The curvy woman orgasmed with a shriek.

Jill had been watching, but as her friend came, she slipped her hand between her thighs and started rubbing. Then she straddled me and gripped my cock, guiding it to her pussy. She slid down, and her cunt was tight and perfect. Her thick thighs rested on either side of my hips, and when I thrusted up into her, her beautiful breasts jiggled.

I couldn't believe this was the woman who had driven me to band practice and made me sandwiches during high school. Now, she was an uninhibited freak. She rode me with her head tossed back, and then Carol-Ann held a vibrator to her clit, and Jill came with a long moan.

"My turn," Carol-Ann said. She had tattoos all over her arms and shoulders, her pussy was bare, and a tiny heart was tattooed on her lower belly. She nudged Jill aside, then sat on my dick. If anything, she was even wetter than Jill, and significantly rougher. She raked her nails down my chest and fitted her hands around my throat. As she rode me, Lisette and Olive got into a super-hot 69 position on the bed beside us, tongues pressing against pussies.

This was now officially the best day of my life. My only concern was making sure I didn't come too fast. The mix of bondage and sexy MILFs was about to make me explode. Thankfully, Carol-Ann came quickly, and then it was Lisette's turn.

She was so voluptuous it almost hurt to look at her. Breasts, waist, hips, thighs—all of it appealed to me. I wished I was free so I could grip her hips and thrust up into her, but instead, she straddled me in a reverse-cowgirl position. Jill stood at the end of the bed and kissed her while she bounced up and down on my dick. All I could focus on was the slap of flesh as she used me. My dick slid in and out of her beautiful pussy, and I watched every blissful second of it. I strained against my restraints, but I was fully tied.

It occurred to me that I was just a convenient cock and that they'd been waiting for an opportunity to give in to their old college lesbian feelings. It wasn't a tragic thought. If they wanted to use me as a fuck-stick, I was more than willing.

Soon enough, Olive took over for Lisette. I was glad this was the final woman, because I wasn't going to last, and I desperately wanted to service them all. As I fucked Olive, Jill crawled up my body and sat on my face, and there was no doubt that the best ride of my life was almost over. The taste of my best friend's mom's pussy was even better for how illicit it was. I came with a shout, nearly hurting my wrists and ankles as I struggled with the bindings.

Then they let me go.

Just kidding. These women were freaks. And we all knew Keith wouldn't be home anytime soon.

—Lucas K., Riverside, California

PHOTO: BOB POOL / SHUTTERSTOCK

My Faire Lady

I WORK at Renaissance Faires. That probably sounds crazy to most people, but to those in my small subculture, it's the best life possible. I travel around the country with fellow artisans and performers, sleeping in tents and enjoying the simple life. We chat, drink, and have sex at night, and during the days, we demonstrate traditional handicrafts. I'm a leather worker, which means I make clothing, belts, and accessories, and sell them to drunk Faire visitors.

PHOTO: SERHII YURKIV / SHUTTERSTOCK

The great part about the Ren Faire life is the chance to meet new people while abandoning some of the social norms that usually constrain us. I used to work in admin before I got into this life, and I was utterly miserable as an office drone. My life is a thousand times better now, even if the money is inconsistent, and we're somewhat at the mercy of weather and attendance.

One of my favorite things about the Ren Faire is how easy it is to get laid. It feels like the summer camps I remember attending as a horny adolescent, except everyone's of age and I'm much more successful. Leatherworking has given me muscles women admire, and since the lifestyle involves a lot of booze, inhibitions get lowered quickly.

Last season, we were near Los Angeles at one of the best festivals–the Original Renaissance Pleasure Faire. It's always a great festival because the film industry people make incredible costumes. The weather's also good, which means business is booming. And the quality of the actors is high, which makes for fun scenes and improvisations.

But the main reason I love the Original Renaissance Pleasure Faire is because of a certain member of the Queen's Court. "Queen Elizabeth I" makes frequent appearances at the Faire, and one of her ladies-in-waiting is a stacked brunette with the most beautiful eyes I've ever seen. I'd encountered her multiple years in a row, and every time it felt like I'd been shot with Cupid's arrow.

Her name is Rainey, and prior to the last season, I'd only spoken with her a few times, although we eye-fucked each other a lot. But last summer, I was determined to make an impression.

Many of the performers go home after the day's activities are done, but some of us stick around for the party. One night we were gathered around a campfire eating hot dogs and drinking beer when Rainey and a few other ladies showed up. I shifted over on the bench to make room and was thrilled when she sat next to me.

"My lady," I said, bowing with a ridiculous flair.

She rolled her eyes. "You don't have to keep up the act."

She was right, I didn't need to, but Rainey was the kind of woman I wanted to treat like a princess. I wanted to worship her and bring her gifts and let her tromp all over me with her pretty silken shoes if she wanted to. And I'd had just enough beer to tell her so.

"It isn't an act," I said with more confidence than I should have felt. "I'd love to serve you, my lady."

She giggled, then looked me up and down. "Oh, yeah?" she asked in a sultry voice. "What would you do?"

Now, I'm a confident guy–clearly, since I earnestly and wholeheartedly participate in Renaissance Faires–but something extra came over me then, a nearly preternatural confidence. I leaned in to murmur in her ear. "I would worship your body," I told her. "I would lick and suck and kiss whatever you wanted me to. I would make you come over and over again."

Her eyes widened, and we stared at each other for a few long moments. Then she set her beer down, grabbed my hand, and tugged me up off the bench.

I ignored the whistles of my friends as she led me away. "Which tent is yours?" she asked as we stumbled away from the fire pit.

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I led her there, and as soon as the tent flap was closed behind us, she was on me. She kissed me passionately, and I was surprised and excited by her vehemence. Apparently I wasn't the only one who'd appreciated our eye-fucking sessions.

I pushed her onto my huge air mattress. She'd changed back into jeans and a camisole, so I tugged them off, leaving her in a matching bra and panties set. She stripped my shirt off eagerly, then fumbled at the buttons on my pants.

I kissed from her neck down to her breasts as she loosened my pants and pushed her hand inside. She maneuvered past my boxer briefs and clasped my dick in one soft hand. A firm pump had me rolling my hips, already eager to get inside her.

"Call me 'my lady' again," she whispered.

"You have the most beautiful breasts, my lady," I said, tugging the cup of one bra aside so I could suck her nipple.

"What about my cunt?" she asked, and the lewd word sent a tingle over me.

I scooted back on the air mattress, cursing at how cramped the tent was, and then hooked my fingers around her panties and pulled them down.

Her pussy was perfect, just like the rest of her, and I breathed in, enjoying the scent. Then I dove in, licking her enthusiastically. I slid my fingers inside her pussy, awed at how wet she already was.

She tugged on my hair. "Tell me about my cunt," she demanded.

"It's the best cunt in the world, my lady," I said. "I could eat it all night."

I sucked on her swollen little clit, enjoying the way she shivered.

She seemed to like extra pressure, so I replaced my lips with my fingers and rubbed her clit in tight little circles. She gasped and lifted her legs so her feet were resting on my back. She grinded against my fingers, urging me on, and soon she was coming. I kept licking and rubbing through the whole shuddering experience, feeling like the most talented person on the planet.

She finally pushed my hand away.

"Your fingers are calloused," she said, sounding happily dazed.

"I'm sorry, my lady." Calling her that was getting progressively hotter.

Hair tussled, eyes shining with pleasure, Rainey grinned at me. "No need to be sorry," she said. "It was fantastic."

She guided me up to settle between her legs, then kissed me. My dick was hard, and it rubbed against her wet pussy with every shift of our hips. I pumped over her, wishing I could be inside all that wetness.

Rainey pushed me away, then turned us so I was lying on my back on the air mattress and she was kneeling over me. She rubbed her pussy over my dick a few times, getting it nice and wet. Then she put her hand over my throat.

"Do you have a condom?" she asked, squeezing slightly. "I want you to serve me with your thick cock."

We were apparently engaged in a full-on role-play scenario. I fumbled for my bag and retrieved a condom, then unrolled it over myself. "Does this please you, my lady?" I asked, fisting my cock to show her how thick it was.

"It's the best cunt in the world, my lady," I said to Rainey. "I could eat it all night."

PHOTO: FAMILY TV / SHUTTERSTOCK

She considered it, as if weighing the merits of my dick. “It will please me more once it’s inside me.”

I held my erection in place while she raised her hips over me and guided me in. She was wet from her orgasm, and slid down easily, although she was still tight as a glove. She gasped and threw her head back once I was all the way inside. The tent was nearly dark, but the moon provided enough illumination that I could see the arched line of her back and the look of pleasure on her face. She raised her hips up and sank back down, stroking my dick with all that sweet, hot skin.

I held her hips and let her test out the fit of my body in hers. Soon she’d grown accustomed to it, and she shifted until she was leaning forward. The position allowed her to slam back onto my erection with a decent amount of force, and once she combined that with a hand over my throat to hold me in place, I thought I might die of pleasure. She was riding me, using me, and I wanted her to take everything she wanted.

The pressure at my throat was making me lightheaded. I told her so, and she loosened her grip a bit, then slapped me in the face. The sting startled me, but then my skin flushed with tingly warmth, and it just added to the pleasure.

“Again, my lady,” I told her.

She slapped me on the other cheek, then punched my shoulder. I moaned, loving the solid hit of her fist. I begged her for more, and she obliged, slapping and battering me with just enough pressure that the feel of the blows lingered. She leaned further forward and bit my neck, and that sharp spike of pain was better than anything. My hips jerked up, and my dick pressed deep. She gasped and threw her head back, so I did it again, bucking up into her with as much force as I could manage. I held her to my chest as my hips worked and my cock slammed into her.

“Make me come,” she commanded.

I was happy to oblige. I reached for her clit, then set up a solid rhythm with both my hips and my fingers. She was still on top, but I had all the power at that moment, and I used it mercilessly.

She gasped, and her body stiffened, then shook all over. She trembled through her orgasm, muttering incoherently as the pleasure washed over her. Then she collapsed onto my chest, breathing hard.

“Huzzah,” she murmured, sounding nearly drunk with pleasure.

I laughed at the classic Ren Faire cheer. “Huzzah,” I echoed. But my dick was still hard, and I burned with the need to come. I nudged up into her, and she sighed and sat up.

“Your turn,” she said, reaching behind herself to fondle my balls. “Fuck me like you mean it.”

I gripped her hips and bucked up into her like a runaway bronco, jamming my dick as deep as I could. Her nails dug into my chest as she rode me, and then I was coming, blissful and fierce. I shook and clenched as the release rocketed through me.

We cuddled on my air mattress afterwards. She nuzzled my neck. “I like it when you call me ‘my lady,’” she said.

I grinned. “Well, my lady, I’m always happy to serve.”

—Michael O., Bend, Oregon

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In the Wild

BEING outdoors has always made me feel a little wild. My husband has never understood why it brings out the freak in me, but he's learned to stop questioning it and instead just takes me to our cabin regularly.

Sitting by the campfire, sipping a cold beer, is essentially foreplay for me. The darkness of the woods, the sounds of nature, and the crisp feel of fresh air make me want to let go of all my inhibitions and become the animal that prowls at the core of me. →

PHOTO: FAMILY TV / SHUTTERSTOCK

The last time we went to our cabin for the weekend, we were sitting by the fire, beginning to feel the first chill of nighttime air, when my husband turned to me and said, "Take your clothes off."

I always got a special thrill when he ordered me around sexually, tapping into the excitement I felt when submitting. I reached down to unlace my boots, then quickly stripped the rest of my clothes off until I was standing there completely naked.

"Touch yourself," he ordered, taking a deep swig of his beer.

I slid my hand across my hard nipples, stoking and pinching them gently. Then I worked my way down to my pussy, parting my lips slightly to wet my fingertips before circling back up to rub lazy circles around my clit.

He watched me intently, the firelight reflecting in his eyes. When I thought I was going to come, I tilted my head up, and after a moment the stars came into focus overhead. "Stop," he commanded.

He set his beer down, got up from the chair, and slowly walked over to me, circling around me like I was his prey. I shivered as he stood behind me and pressed his lips to the curve of my neck, nipping with his teeth as he kissed me there.

He came back around, fisting his hand in my hair and forcing me down to my knees. I dropped a hand back down to my pussy and kept touching myself as he pulled his hard cock out of his pants.

He didn't give me any time to work it into my mouth, but just used his grip on my hair to thrust his dick deep into my throat.

I gagged and choked as he fucked my face, but kept furiously rubbing my clit, paying no mind to the drool running down my chin or the guttural sounds coming from my throat.

I wanted to taste my husband's come before I got to swallow it, but at the very last second, he pulled out and came all over my tits. It was filthy and so terribly sexy.

Instead of releasing his hold on my hair, he then dragged me forward until I was lying on my stomach in the dirt.

"Stick your ass up. I'm not finished with you yet."

I did as he commanded, but kept my chest on the ground. I was painfully aroused knowing I was covered in semen, and that the dirt would be sticking to it, making me truly filthy.

He got behind me, tugging my hips up higher, but letting me keep my fingers on my cunt, ready to coax out the orgasm I'd been denied so far.

I squealed with surprise when he slapped my ass several times. He pulled my cheeks apart, and I swore I could feel him looking at my pussy and asshole, deciding where he would fuck me next.

I felt his wet thumb press against my asshole just as his dick nudged against my pussy, not giving me time to adjust before thrusting deep inside me.

He pounded into me with slow, deliberate strokes, letting me get close to coming before spanking my ass again and taking me back from the orgasm. When he finally thrust his thumb into my ass, it felt so good I screamed out in climax. I didn't care that my face was in the dirt, I just wanted more of whatever he wanted to give me.

He didn't slow down, continuing to fuck me faster and harder, grabbing my hair when I started to slide forward against his thrusts. He held me there on all fours, taking his pleasure like a rutting animal.

When he finally released his hold on my hair, I fell to the ground in a wild, satisfied mess. He helped me up from the ground, leading me straight into the bathroom to get cleaned up—and then to bed.

—Marla C., Seattle, Washington

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EVERYONE knows that women love to masturbate in the shower. Call it a combination of steam, hot water, and intense, titillating water pressure, but either way, it's a recipe for success. What's better than one girl in the steam? Two. Duh. Did we really need to say that?

PHOTOGRAPHY
MISHA

EMBRACE THE SUCK

WAR HEROES WHO DID IT THEIR WAY

Eccentricity in the ranks is a proud American military tradition.

BY MATT GALLAGHER

THE stoic soldier is an image as enduring as time. Discipline and strength, fortitude, quiet determination—this portrait of an able member of the military has always been with us. Still waters run deep and the like. From the Greek warrior kings to the late Chris Kyle (movie version), it's easy to understand why the dutiful soldier of imagination remains stern. They fight and sometimes die, so we can play and live.

But reality and truth are more complicated, of course. Soldiers are as human as anyone else, which means for every stoic, there's a joker. For every square jaw, there's an angular one. For every brooding Spartan, there's a brash cavalier. Yes, eccentrics in the ranks—not only does it happen, it's a proud American military tradition.

Here are just a few of the eccentric legends who've worn the uniform or served the cause over the years.

Marquis de Lafayette

The OG of American (-ish) martial eccentrics has seen a recent surge of Google searches thanks to his portrayal in that *Hamilton* musical you may have heard about. It's well-earned, and not just because his Broadway version wears a cape—the Frenchman became a war hero at the ripe old age of 20, fighting in the Battle of Brandywine. Staunchly loyal to George Washington, Lafayette's continental perspective and biting wit often got deployed on ambitious Revolutionary officers who dared to question Washington, from Charles Lee to the "always drunk" Adam Stephen.

(Sarah Vowell's *Lafayette in the Somewhat United States* is a rollicking biography for readers interested in a book-length look at "The Hero of the Two Worlds.")

Harriet Tubman

Escaped slave. Fierce abolitionist. Underground Railroad conductor. Union Army scout and spy who recruited former slaves to hunt for rebel encampments and report on Confederate troop movements. Christian mystic. Isn't it time to put this American hero on the twenty-dollar bill?

Mary Edwards Walker

In all of America's many, many wars, how in God's name has only one woman been awarded the Medal of Honor? I didn't know that until I began my research for this article, yet here we are. That sole recipient is Walker, a civilian surgeon who often dressed as a man to, well, stick it to The Man. (In another age she'd have made a kickass punk rocker, I think.)

PHOTO: EVERETT HISTORICAL / SHUTTERSTOCK

President Theodore Roosevelt delivering a speech in Newcastle, Wyoming, 1903.

Mary Edwards Walker

She worked as a volunteer field surgeon throughout the Civil War, saving lives and performing on-the-spot amputations from Bull Run in 1861 to Atlanta in 1864. After the war, Walker became a leading voice in the suffragette movement. She probably deserves her likeness to be on some greenbacks, too.

Theodore Roosevelt

The Rough Riders' charge up San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War in 1898 is the stuff of military lore. Roosevelt was 39 at the time—not necessarily a young man anymore—and very eager to test himself in combat. His famous "crowded hour" ensued, effectively snuffing out Spain's presence in the Western Hemisphere in the process. While Roosevelt and his Riders weren't the only troops responsible for taking San Juan Hill and ending the war—the 10th U.S. Cavalry of black Buffalo Soldiers also played a vital role—they did soak up the attention from the press. Teddy was good at encouraging that.

"All men who feel any power of joy in battle, know what it is like when the wolf rises in the heart," Roosevelt later wrote about the victory that helped propel him to the presidency. Was he still outfitted in the sombrero accented with a blue polka-dot handkerchief he wore when they charged the hill? I mean, probably.

George Patton

Here are some Patton quotes:
- "The object of war is not to die for your country but to make the other bastard die for his."
- "All very successful commanders are prima donnas and must be so treated."
- "A piece of spaghetti or a military unit can only be led from the front end."

And here are some quotes *about* Patton:
- "Won't that old bastard ever get enough of war? He wanted to fight in the Pacific and I wish to God they'd let him go."—Anonymous GI
- "He was insane. He thought he was living in the Dark Ages. Soldiers were peasants to him. I didn't like that attitude, but I certainly respected his theories and the techniques he used to get his men out of their foxholes."—Bill Mauldin
- "We had to wait until the Patton Army in France to see the most astonishing achievements in mobile warfare."—General Erwin "Desert Fox" Rommel

David Hackworth

Hackworth probably doesn't have the name recognition of the others on this list, but he deserves his place among them. A veteran of both Korea and Vietnam, Hackworth earned ten—yes, ten—Silver Stars over the course of his distinguished military career. A mustang (enlisted to officer), Hackworth earned a battlefield commission in Korea and rose all the way to colonel before a wildly frank television interview outlining the state of the war in Vietnam ended his chance at general's stars.

Hack, as he was known to most, then moved to Australia and became an acclaimed journalist and national security analyst. A mutual friend once described Hackworth to me as "the inspiration for every damn Vietnam antihero there's ever been," and I can't recommend enough his autobiography, *About Face: Odyssey of an American Warrior*.

The man lived like he wrote: with enormous force and passion.

Dakota Meyer

One of the heroes of the Battle of Ganjgal in Afghanistan in 2009, this native son of Kentucky isn't afraid to sometimes get political, which cuts against the grain of most living Medal of Honor recipients. He's praised and criticized decisions made both by former President Obama and President Trump, and recently had a video make the rounds supporting the idea of women troops serving in combat.

"I've stood next to men who couldn't pass the standards, who should have had no fucking business to be standing in a gunfight where someone is trying to shoot at them," Meyer said. "So I don't understand what the deal is."

Meyer also made recent headlines because of an Instagram spat with his ex-wife, Bristol Palin. (#TeamDakota, all the way.) Like the eccentric war heroes who came before him, Meyer shoots as straight back home as he did abroad, fighting in our name. We're all the better for it. Life's too short for sanitized bullshit. Best to keep it raw and keep it true, like everyone listed here sought to—no matter what.

Matt Gallagher is a U.S. Army veteran of Iraq and the author of the novel "Youngblood" (Atria/Simon & Schuster).

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THE END OF ECCENTRICITY

BY ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ

BACK in the day, you could easily identify eccentrics. They were the ones walking down the street talking to themselves. Today, when you see someone talking to themselves, they are probably on their smartphone.

Back in the day, an eccentric was someone who said whatever he or she thought, without trying to censor offensive or disturbing ideas. Today that person is the President of the United States.

Back in the day, an eccentric was someone who walked around the streets with a blackjack, looking to kill the first black person who assaulted him. Today that is a movie star named Liam Neeson. Back in the day, Larry David would be considered an eccentric. Today, he is a popular curmudgeon. Back in the day, an eccentric was someone who sent thousands of messages to people he didn't know. Today, he is an everyday Twitter user.

Back in the day, eccentrics wanted the United States to become a socialist utopia. Today, some Democrats—including at least one presidential candidate—advocate socialism. Back in the day, eccentrics wanted the United States to become a twelfth-century theocracy. Today, the Republican platform reads like a religious catechism.

Back in the day, eccentrics would show you naked pictures of themselves. Today, teenagers send them to friends, trusting they won't go viral and hurt their prospects for future jobs. Back in the day, eccentrics banged their heads against hard objects. Today, it's called football.

Back in the day, eccentrics played imaginary games with themselves and other imaginary friends. Today, it's a multibillion-dollar business. Back in the day, eccentrics wore their underwear over their clothes. Now Madonna has millions of fans cheering her undergarments.

Back in the day, eccentrics didn't believe in science. Now many Republicans believe, despite overwhelming scientific evidence to the contrary, that climate change is fake news.

Back in the day, eccentrics believed in conspiracy theories about the moon landing being faked. Now Alex Jones has thousands of conspiracy nuts believing that school shootings in which multiple children were killed were staged.

Back in the day, eccentrics believed they knew the Truth with a capital T and there was no need to listen to "false" opinions. Today that is a common view among the hard left on university campuses.

Back in the day, an eccentric was the guy in the brown raincoat scurrying into a theater showing dirty movies. Today, men and woman can watch porn on their computers with the press of a few buttons.

We live in an age where eccentricity and so-called "normalcy" have come closer together than ever. The internet and social media have contributed to this phenomenon. Normal people post on Facebook their most eccentric and bizarre thoughts. Young people share photographs on social media that will come back to haunt them when they become adults.

Privacy seems less of a concern today than it ever was. Many people believe that because it is so easy to share private thoughts, images, and activities, that it is bad form not to do so. Our reasonable expectations of privacy have diminished with the advent of omnipresent iPhone cameras, security cameras, and other virtual "eyes." Everything we say, do, or think is now fair game in our security state in which the National Security Agency hears and sees so much of what was previously regarded as private.

With so much now in the public eye, it turns out that we are all somewhat eccentric in our private moments. The difference is that back in the day, private moments were generally kept private, so no one, except those closest to us, learned of our peculiarities. Today, for so many people, private moments are no longer kept private. They are shared for all to see. So our private eccentricities become public and nearly everyone can be viewed as an eccentric.

And if everyone is an eccentric, then no one is an eccentric. Hence, the end of eccentricity is at hand. Perhaps that is a healthy development—part of a process that includes eliminating sharp lines between the normal and the abnormal, between the acceptable and the deviant, between the sinner and the saint.

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